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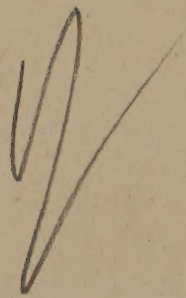

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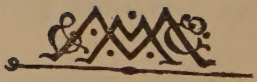
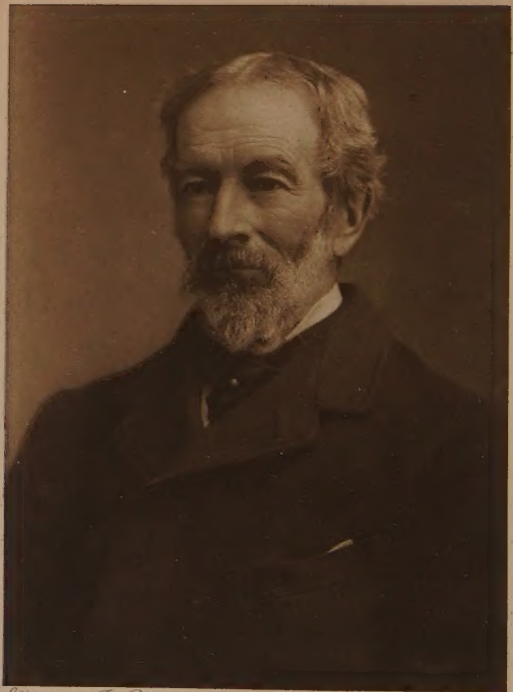
LONDON LYRICS





Elliott and Fry, Photo. Emery Walker, Ph. Sc.

F. Locker Lampson

LONDON LYRICS

BY

FREDERICK LOCKER LAMPSON

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

By AUSTIN DOBSON

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1904

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Apollo made, one April day,
A new thing in the rhyming way;
Its turn was neat, its wit was clear,
It wavered 'twixt a smile and tear;
Then Momus gave a touch satiric,
And it became a "London Lyric."

[A. D.]

Rowfant, *October* 1, 1881.

CHRONOLOGY

FREDERICK LOCKER LAMPSON

Born in Greenwich Hospital	*May* 29, 1821
Entered Somerset House	*March*, 1841
Transferred to Admiralty	*November*, 1842
Married Lady Charlotte Bruce	*July*, 1850
Quitted Civil Service.	
Published London Lyrics, *first edition*	1857
Published Lyra Elegantiarum	1867
Lady Charlotte Locker died	*April* 26, 1872
Married Miss Hannah Jane Lampson	*July* 6, 1874
Published Patchwork	1879
Took name of Lampson	1885
Rowfant Library Catalogue issued	1886
Enlarged edition of Lyra Elegantiarum	1891
Published London Lyrics, *twelfth edition*	1893
Died at Rowfant, Sussex	*May* 30, 1895
My Confidences *published*	1896
Appendix to Rowfant Catalogue issued	1900

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INTRODUCTION

I

THE first edition of the *London Lyrics* of Frederick Locker Lampson, better known as Frederick Locker, appeared in 1857;—the latest, in 1893. In this solitary collection, modified or expanded as fresh impressions were called for, is comprised all the author's work in rhyme which he thought worthy of preservation. His earliest illustrators were George Cruikshank and Richard Doyle; his last, Kate Greenaway and Randolph Caldecott —names which in themselves seem to mark the extremes of the period during which the book was in progress. Between the high spirits of the elder artists, and the gentler humour of Miss Greenaway and Caldecott, there is an appreciable difference,—a difference which has its practical analogue in the verses they pictorially interpreted. For it is certain that when Mr. Locker set out in the

fifties, his standard was not the standard at which he was aiming in the eighties. The times had changed, and he had changed with them. At the beginning Praed was his admitted model; he also admired Hood and "Thomas Ingoldsby." He essayed to reproduce the antithetical trick of the first, the perfected pun of the second, the dexterous word-chiming of the third. His primary ambition, we may surmise, was no more than to write humorous verse of the better kind, adding to it the impress of his own personality; his next, to give greater finish, and a less trivial motive, to that class of metrical effort which has been unscientifically called *vers de société*; his eventual and ultimate endeavour, to produce something which, preserving its atmosphere of origin, should be neither one nor the other, but might fairly be described as poetry—not, perhaps, as poetry of the "big bow-wow kind" (in Walter Scott's phrase), but yet essentially poetry, in virtue of its theme, its level of technique, and its elevation of tone. Anyone who will be at the pains to compare the "Piccadilly" and the "Tempora Mutantur" of the first, with

the "Rotten Row" and the "St. James's Street" of the fourth edition, and then to contrast these with such graver efforts as "The Old Stonemason," "My Song," "The Cuckoo," will readily comprehend how the writer's maturest and best affections were for Wordsworth's "Solitary Reaper" rather than the "headlong drollery" of Barham. This development is disguised, it is true, by a dexterous shuffling of the dates; and it is also further perplexed by the author's sedulous attempts to bring his more youthful pieces into line with his later ideas; but whether he was obeying an instinctive impulse of growth, or simply following the trend of the time, it is plain that he ended with a purpose different from that with which he had begun.

Although this is the logical conclusion to be drawn from *London Lyrics* in their final form—and accident, it may be noted, has favoured it by confining the poet's work to one small volume—Mr. Locker had native characteristics of his own which were independent of external conditions. These he retained throughout. "My aim," he says in his autobiography, "was humble. I used

the ordinary metres and rhymes, the simplest language and ideas, I hope flavoured with individuality. I strove, as at this moment I am striving, not to be obscure, not to be flat, and above all, not to be tedious." In these attempts he must be held to have succeeded. He was too careful of brevity to be ever wearisome; and of flatness or obscurity he may assuredly be acquitted. As a metrist he is uniformly neat and polished. He can be charmingly playful; he can be tender; he can be archly gallant. His manner is clear, direct, and simple; his wit as lively as his irony is delicate; and his humour seldom without its touch of sadness. The mingling of mirth and pity, indeed, he claims as part of his equipment:—

> Oh, for the Poet-Voice that swells
> To lofty truths, or noble curses—
> I only wear the cap and bells,
> And yet some Tears are in my verses.

His chief note—a distinguished critic[1] has said—is ease. Where he occasionally seems to fall short is in constructive skill. He resorts too readily to asterisks. Seeking

[1] Prof. George Saintsbury.

continually after spontaneity, his thoughts are sometimes "pearls at random strung" rather than linked and beaten goldsmith's work. With poems in their essence detached and desultory, such as "A Human Skull," this, of course, matters little; but it is of moment when the leading idea is one which should advance from the opening, without break of sequence, to fade or culminate at the close. On the other hand, it is perhaps owing to this very peculiarity that several of the pieces which he himself would have regarded as less successful, and some even of those which he suppressed entirely, contain isolated couplets or stanzas which well deserve to be remembered. The beautiful motto to "At Her Window":—

> Ah, Minstrel, how strange is
> The carol you sing!
> Let Psyche, who ranges
> The garden of spring,
> Remember the changes
> December will bring;

the quaint conceit of

> And like yon clock, when twelve shall sound
> To call our souls away,
> Together may our hands be found
> An earnest that we pray;

and that other well-known verse about Mrs. Grundy quoted at p. 17, are all from discarded poems. That he did not prosper greatly in the difficult path of translation—a path the late Lord Bowen declared to be strewn with the bones of perished pilgrims—is only an additional proof of his individuality. Corneille compelling his proud verse into the compass of a pauseless quatrain, the morning freshness of Clément Marot,—these are things which our tongue will only capture when it has caught the *curiosa felicitas* of Horace. But the author of the "Invitation to Rome" and the "Old Oak-tree at Hatfield Broad-oak," of "Gerty's Glove" and "My Neighbour Rose," of "It might have been" and "The Unrealised Ideal"—can dispense with the borrowed triumphs of paraphrase. His work is his own, marked with his signet and sign-manual; expressed in his particular tone and trick of speech; and however, as an executant, he may "touch the tender stops of various quills," it is impossible to mistake his utterance for that of another. "*Il y a du tour et de l'esprit partout*"—as Mme. de Sévigné said of her daughter's letters. Surely

this is to have found that saving virtue which Lowell named style,—that uncommunicated and incommunicable quality which Arnold named distinction!

II

The present issue of *London Lyrics* is based upon what is described as "the Twelfth Edition *published* in England,"[1] and it is printed from a copy of that edition in which the author had made some later corrections. One of his practices was, to preserve certain of his minor pieces by turning them into mottoes for others which he regarded as of more permanent value. In this way "Cupid on the Crossing" was made to do duty as a heading for "Piccadilly," and to "Little Dinky" was prefixed "The Twins." But from pencil indications in the copy here employed, he would appear at the last to have been hesitating whether it would not be well to give these lesser efforts a separate status in his pages; and it is obvious that some of them—*e.g.* "A Terrible Infant," which comes before "At Hurlingham"—

[1] See *Notes*, p. 166.

have only an arbitrary connection with the verses to which they are attached. In this volume it has been thought expedient to act upon the author's latest intentions as far as they could be ascertained, and to print the complete pieces separately, placing them invariably immediately before the poems for which they had been employed as mottoes. Where these mottoes are only quotations from other poems, rejected or otherwise, they have been left as they were, such information as is necessary respecting them being included in the Notes.

But while tracing, where practicable, the sources of the different epigraphs and poems, no attempt has been made to record the various alterations, corrections, and remodellings to which they have periodically been subjected. All that has been done is to reproduce carefully the last versions the author approved. How, and by what process, these final versions were arrived at, and how they compare with those that preceded them, may be of interest to a small section of critics curious in matters of technical evolution; but, to the ordinary reader, the

inquiry is rather confusing than otherwise, to say nothing of the fact that the preservation of such wastrel from the workshop as disused variants, can have been nowise desired by the writer himself. In five-and-thirty years Mr. Locker altered a good deal, and that he often improved, the most superficial comparison between the first and final versions of "Loulou and Her Cat," or the first and final versions of "Beggars," will amply testify. But we are all many men; and the man of to-day is not always the best critic of the man of yesterday —particularly if both should chance to be of variable vitality.[1] On the whole, however, an author must be trusted—no adverse influence being at work—to be the best judge of his own productions, and in ninety cases out of a hundred he is right. In this connection I take leave to recapitulate here—with slight alteration—a few words which form part of the Introduction to the privately

[1] Under the title of one of the pieces marked for omission, Mr. Locker has put "Written when F. L. was in his dotage or a schoolboy, he forgets which." This, nevertheless, did not prevent him from including it in a subsequent collection.

printed *Rowfant Rhymes*.[1] Mr. Locker, who never saw that book, read and approved the Introduction in manuscript before his death, and must therefore have found himself in agreement with this deliverance, which, to be frank, was also intended as a general plea for the much-suspected practice of revision after publication. Voltaire's injunction to correct while life remains having been recalled, the passage proceeded: "Of such amendment conservative admirers are sometimes impatient. Forgetting by what mental palimpsests a poem has attained to its printed maturity, they resent deviations from the form with which they were at first acquainted. Yet the writer's defence is better than it seems, since he is regarding his work as a whole, and thinking of the future rather than the present. He alters a word, not from mere whim, but because he has used it too often; he changes an image, because on reflection he discovers it to be a mere effort of memory; he retouches a line because, although it has escaped critical comment, he has felt from the first that it

[1] See *Notes*, p. 167.

was inadequate. Of all these things his readers know nothing. But they justify his action, in spite of the *Ars Poetica*."[1]

III

Here by rights I should end. Having, however, known Mr. Locker for some twenty years, and being besides indebted to him for many kindnesses, I may perhaps be pardoned if I occupy a final page with sundry memories of his personality—as they remain with me. When, in 1873, my first book of verse served as my introduction to him, he was already past middle age. He had besides something of an elder generation, a touch of the extinct *bel air*,—that refined and reposeful amenity which has vanished before the strenuous life and obtrusive upholstery. To me, ungregarious by habit, and a much occupied man, the acquaintanceship was a wholly delightful sensation,—an unhoped spy-hole, as it were, in the stage-door of the *Comédie humaine*. My new friend with the fine taste in literature and art, had this in addition, that his knowledge was experimental where mine was

[1] *Nescit vox missa reverti.*

theoretical. He had seen people of whom I had only heard: he had visited places of which I had only read. He seemed to know everyone,—to have the entrée everywhere. He would tell of Landor and Earl Russell, of Lord Tennyson and Lamartine, of Thackeray and Paul de Kock, of George Eliot and Fred Archer, of Dickens and Tom Sayers, of whomsoever you please, sketching them lightly with a deft, quick touch in which a native kindliness was always tripping up a reluctant but very acute perception of anything like vulgarity or pretence. In his earliest book he took for motto—"*Un pauvre cynique qui n'entend malice, et parfois sentimental*," and the characterisation, bating its needless, though perfectly genuine humility, is not unhappy. As a talker and story-teller he was unrivalled, comprehending to the full the necessity for never tiring his hearer,—for suppressing the non-essential, preserving the picturesque, progressing steadily to the point. Easily bored himself, the dread of boring others that kept his poems brief, was invaluable to him as a *raconteur*. I can never remember his being

dull. Some of his best anecdotes are contained in that "little lounging miscellany," the *Patchwork* of 1879; but attractive as this collection is, it lacks in cold type the effective atmosphere with which he was wont to invest his spoken narrative,—the half-interrogatory smile at the finish, the drop and readjustment of the eyeglass. Modest by nature, and with a real reverence for learning, Mr. Locker would have shrunk from calling himself a scholar (a word too often used as indiscriminately as the "grand old name of gentleman"),—or even a student; and, in truth, like Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, his researches lay more among men than books, while his failing health in latter years made any sustained application distasteful to him. But his instinct was unerring; and in merely dallying with a paper-knife,—languidly separating the leaves of a volume apparently without opening the pages, as I have often seen him do,—he would somehow manage to extract its secret, and to the last he continued to keep *au courant* of what was best or freshest in contemporary letters. His idiosyncrasy as a connoisseur was of the same type. He may

have haunted Christie's and the bric-à-brac shops; but he certainly never ground laboriously at handbooks, or worked museum cases. Not the less, he seldom failed to secure the rare copy with the A flyleaf, the impression with the unique *remarque*, the impeccable *sang de bœuf*, the irreproachable *rose Dubarry*. He had the true collector's *flair*,—an ounce of which is worth a pound of pedantry. Of his successes in this way the *Rowfant Catalogue* is a standing monument,—a veritable treasure-house of Shakespeare *quartos*, priceless manuscripts, first issues, tall copies, and Blake and Chodowiecki plates. As a man—for I am fully aware that the foregoing jottings are purely objective—his portrait must be sought for in those singularly candid pages which, under cover of a motto from his favourite Montaigne, he entitled *My Confidences*. But for a short *aperçu* of his character, I know nothing better than the words with which his son-in-law, Mr. Augustine Birrell, closes the Preface to the *Appendix to the Rowfant Catalogue*:—"Frederick Locker was essentially a man of the world; he devoted his leisure hours to

studying the various sides of human nature, and drawing the good that he could out of all sorts and conditions of men. His delicate health prevented him from taking any very active share in stirring events; but he was content, unembittered, to look on, and his energies were continually directed towards gathering about him those friends and acquaintances who, with their intellectual acquirements, combined the charms of good manners, culture, and refinement."

AUSTIN DOBSON.

EALING,
November 1904

THE UNREALIZED IDEAL

My only Love is always near,—
In country or in town
I see her twinkling feet, I hear
The whisper of her gown.

She foots it ever fair and young,
Her locks are tied in haste,
And one is o'er her shoulder flung,
And hangs below her waist.

She ran before me in the meads;
And down this world-worn track
She leads me on; but while she leads
She never gazes back.

And yet her voice is in my dreams,
To witch me more and more;
That wooing voice! Ah me, it seems
Less near me than of yore.

Lightly I sped when hope was high,
And youth beguiled the chase;
I follow—follow still; but I
Shall never see her Face.

TO MY GRANDMOTHER

(SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE BY MR. ROMNEY)

Under the elm a rustic seat
Was merriest Susan's pet retreat
To merry-make.

THIS Relative of mine
Was she seventy-and-nine
When she died?
By the canvas may be seen
How she look'd at seventeen,
As a Bride.

Beneath a summer tree
Her maiden reverie
Has a charm;
Her ringlets are in taste;
What an arm! and what a waist
For an arm!

With her bridal-wreath, bouquet,
Lace farthingale, and gay
Falbala,—
If Romney's touch be true,
What a lucky dog were you,
Grandpapa!

Her lips are sweet as love;
They are parting! Do they move?
Are they dumb?
Her eyes are blue, and beam
Beseechingly, and seem
To say, "Come!"

What funny fancy slips
From atween these cherry lips?
Whisper me,
Fair Sorceress in paint,
What canon says I mayn't
Marry thee?

That good-for-nothing Time
Has a confidence sublime!
When I first

Saw this Lady, in my youth,
Her winters had, forsooth,
Done their worst.

Her locks, as white as snow,
Once shamed the swarthy crow;
By-and-by
That fowl's avenging sprite
Set his cruel foot for spite
Near her eye.

Her rounded form was lean,
And her silk was bombazine:
Well I wot
With her needles would she sit,
And for hours would she knit,—
Would she not?

Ah perishable clay!
Her charms had dropt away
One by one:
But if she heaved a sigh
With a burthen, it was, "Thy
Will be done."

In travail, as in tears,
With the fardel of her years
Overprest,
In mercy she was borne
Where the weary and the worn
Are at rest.

Oh if you now are there,
And sweet as once you were,
Grandmamma,
This nether world agrees
You'll all the better please
Grandpapa.

A HUMAN SKULL

A HUMAN Skull! I bought it passing cheap,
No doubt 'twas dearer to its first employer!
I thought mortality did well to keep
Some mute memento of the Old Destroyer.

Time was, some may have prized its blooming skin;
Here lips were woo'd, perhaps, in transport tender;
Some may have chuck'd what was a dimpled chin,
And never had my doubt about its gender.

Did She live yesterday or ages back?
What colour were the eyes when bright and waking?
And were your ringlets fair, or brown, or black,
Poor little Head! that long has done with aching?

It may have held (to shoot some random
shots)
Thy brains, Eliza Fry! or Baron Byron's;
The wits of Nelly Gwynne, or Doctor Watts,—
Two quoted bards. Two philanthropic
sirens.

But this I trust is clearly understood;
If man or woman,—if adored or hated—
Whoever own'd this Skull was not so good,
Nor quite so bad as many may have stated.

* * * *

Who love can need no special type of Death;
He bares his awful face too soon, too often;
Immortelles bloom in Beauty's bridal wreath,
And does not yon green elm contain a
coffin?

O True-Love mine, what lines of care are
these?
The heart still lingers with its golden hours,
But fading tints are on the chestnut-trees,
And where is all that lavish wealth of
flowers?

The end is near. Life lacks what once it gave,
Yet Death hath promises that call for praises;
A very worthless rogue may dig the grave,
But Hands unseen will dress the turf with daisies.

1860.

MY NEIGHBOUR ROSE

THOUGH walls but thin our hearths divide,
We're strangers, dwelling side by side;—
How gaily all your days must glide
Unvex'd by labour!
I've seen you weep, and could have wept;
I've heard you sing (and might have slept!)
Sometimes I hear your chimney swept,
My Charming Neighbour!

Your pets are mine. Pray what may ail
The pup, once eloquent of tail?
I wonder why your nightingale
Is mute at sunset.
Your puss, demure and pensive, seems
Too fat to mouse. Much she esteems
Yon sunny wall, and, dozing, dreams
Of mice she once ate.

Our tastes agree. I dote upon
Frail jars, turquoise and celadon,
The *Wedding March* of Mendelssohn,
And *Penseroso.*
When sorely tempted to purloin
Your *Pietà* of Marc Antoine,
Fair virtue doth fair-play enjoin,
Fair Virtuoso!

At times an *Ariel*, cruel-kind,
Will kiss my lips, and stir your blind,
And whisper low, "She hides behind;
Thou art not lonely."
The tricksy sprite would erst assist
At hush'd Verona's moonlight tryst;—
Sweet Capulet, thou wert not kiss'd
By light winds only.

I miss the simple days of yore,
When two long braids of hair you wore,
And *Chat Botté* was wonder'd o'er,
In corner cosy.
But gaze not back for tales like those:
It's all in order, I suppose;
The bud is now a blooming Rose,—
A rosy-posy!

Indeed, farewell to bygone years;
How wonderful the change appears;
For curates now, and cavaliers,
In turn perplex you:
The last are birds of feather gay,
Who swear the first are birds of prey;—
I'd scare them all had I my way,
But that might vex you.

Sometimes I've envied, it is true,
That Hero, joyous twenty-two,
Who sent *bouquets* and *billets doux*,
And wore a sabre.
The Rogue! how close his arm he wound
About Her waist, who never frown'd.
He loves you, Child. Now, is he bound
To love *my* Neighbour?

The bells are ringing. As is meet,
White favours fascinate the street,
Sweet faces greet me, rueful-sweet
'Twixt tears and laughter:
They crowd the door to see her go,
The bliss of one brings many woe;—
Ay, kiss the Bride, and I will throw
The old shoe after.

What change in one short afternoon,
My own dear Neighbour gone,—so soon!
Is yon pale orb her honey-moon
Slow rising hither?
O lady, wan and marvellous!
How often have we communed thus!
Sweet memory shall dwell with us,
And joy go with her.

1861.

THE WIDOW'S MITE

A Widow—she had only one!
A puny and decrepit Son;
But, day and night,
Though fretful oft, and weak and small,
A loving Child, he was her all—
The Widow's Mite.

The Widow's Mite! ay, so sustain'd,
She battled onward, nor complain'd
That friends were fewer:
And while she toil'd for daily fare,
A little crutch upon the stair
Was music to her.

I saw her then,—and now I see
That, though resign'd and cheerful, she
Has sorrow'd much:
She has, He gave it tenderly,
Much faith; and, carefully laid by,
A little Crutch.

1856.

ST. JAMES'S STREET

(*See note*)

St. James's Street, of classic fame,
For Fashion still is seen there:
St. James's Street? I know the name,
I almost think I've been there!
Why, that's where *Sacharissa* sigh'd
When Waller read his ditty;
Where Byron lived, and Gibbon died,
And Alvanley was witty.

A famous Street! To yonder Park
Young Churchill stole in class-time;
Come, gaze on fifty men of mark,
And then recall the past time.
The *plats* at White's, the play at *Crock's*,
The bumpers to Miss Gunning;
The *bonhomie* of Charley Fox,
And Selwyn's ghastly funning.

The dear old Street of clubs and *cribs*,
As north and south it stretches,
Still seems to smack of Rolliad squibs,
And Gillray's fiercer sketches;
The quaint old dress, the grand old style,
The *mots*, the racy stories;
The wine, the dice, the wit, the bile—
The hate of Whigs and Tories.

At dusk, when I am strolling there,
Dim forms will rise around me;
Lepel flits past me in her chair,
And Congreve's airs astound me!
And once Nell Gwynne, a frail young Sprite,
Look'd kindly when I met her;
I shook my head, perhaps,—but quite
Forgot to quite forget her.

The Street is still a lively tomb
For rich, and gay, and clever;
The crops of dandies bud and bloom,
And die as fast as ever.
Now gilded youth loves cutty pipes,
And slang that's rather *scaring*;
It can't approach its prototypes
In taste, or tone, or bearing.

In Brummell's day of buckle shoes,
  Lawn cravats, and roll collars,
They'd fight, and woo, and bet—and lose
  Like gentlemen and scholars:
I'm glad young men should go the pace,
  I half forgive *Old Rapid*;
These louts disgrace their name and race—
  So vicious and so vapid!

Worse times may come. *Bon ton*, indeed,
  Will then be quite forgotten,
And all we much revere will speed
  From ripe to worse than rotten:
Let grass then sprout between yon stones,
  And owls then roost at Boodle's,
For Echo will hurl back the tones
  Of screaming *Yankee Doodles*.

I love the haunts of old Cockaigne,
  Where wit and wealth were squander'd;
The halls that tell of hoop and train,
  Where grace and rank have wander'd;
Those halls where ladies fair and leal
  First ventured to adore me!
Something of that old love I feel
  For this old Street before me.

1867.

BEGGARS

They eat, and drink, and scheme, and plod,—
They go to church on Sunday;
And many are afraid of God—
And more of Mrs. Grundy.

I AM pacing the Mall in a rapt reverie,
I am thinking if Sophy is thinking of me,
When I'm roused by a ragged and shivering wretch,
Who seems to be well on his way to Jack Ketch.

He has got a bad face, and a shocking bad hat;
A comb in his fist, and he sees I'm a flat,
For he says, "Buy a comb, it's a fine un to wear;
On'y try it, my Lord, through your whiskers and 'air."

He eyes my gold chain, as if greedy to crib it;
He looks just as if he'd been blown from a gibbet.
I pause . . . ! I pass on, and beside the club fire
I settle that Sophy is all I desire.

As I stroll from the club, and am deep in a strophè
That rolls upon all that's delightful in Sophy,
I'm humbly addressed by an "object" unnerving,
So tatter'd a wretch must be "highly deserving."

She begs,—I am touch'd, but I've great circumspection;
I stifle remorse with the soothing reflection
That cases of vice are by no means a rarity—
The worst vice of all's indiscriminate charity.

Am I right? How I wish that my clerical guide
Would settle this question—and others beside.

For always one's heart to be hardening thus,
If wholesome for Beggars, is hurtful for us.

A few minutes later I'm happy and free
To sip "*Its own Sophykins'*" five-o'clock tea:
Her table is loaded, for when a girl marries,
What bushels of rubbish they send her from *Barry's*!

"There's a present for *you*, Sir!" Yes, thanks to her thrift,
My Pet has been able to buy me a gift;
And she slips in my hand, the delightfully sly Thing,
A paper-weight form'd of a bronze lizard writhing.

"What a charming *cadeau*! and so truthfully moulded;
But perhaps you don't know, or deserve to be scolded,
That in casting this metal a live, harmless lizard
Was cruelly tortured in ghost and in gizzard?"

"Po-oh!"—says my Lady (she always says "Pooh"
When she's wilful, and does what she oughtn't to do!)
"Hopgarten protests they've no feeling, and so
It was only their *muscular movement* you know!"

Thinks I (when I've said *au revoir*, and depart—
A Comb in my pocket, a Weight—at my heart),
And when wretched Mendicants writhe, there's a notion
That begging is only their "muscular motion."

BRAMBLE-RISE

What changes greet my wistful eyes
In quiet little Bramble-Rise,
The pride of all the shire;
How alter'd is each pleasant nook;—
And used our dumpy church to look
So dumpy in the spire?

This Village is no longer mine;
And though the inn has changed its sign,
The beer may not be stronger;
The haunt of butterflies and bees
Is now a street, the cottages
Are cottages no longer.

The mud is brick, the thatch is slate,
The pound has tumbled out of date,
And all the trees are stunted:
Surely these thistles once grew figs,
These geese were swans, and once the pigs
More musically grunted.

Where boys and girls pursued their sports
A locomotive puffs and snorts,
And gets my malediction;
The turf is dust—the elves are fled—
The ponds have shrunk—and tastes have spread
To photograph and fiction.

Ah, there's a face I know again,
There's Patty trotting down the lane
To fill her pail with water;
Yes, Patty! but I fear she's not
The tricksy Pat that used to trot,
But Patty,—Patty's daughter!

And has she, too, outlived the spells
Of breezy hills and silent dells
Where childhood loved to ramble?
Life then was thornless to our ken,
And, Bramble-Rise, thy hills were then
A rise without a bramble.

Whence comes the change? 'Twere simply told;
For some grow wise, and some grow cold,
And all feel time and trouble:

If Life an empty bubble be,
How sad for those who cannot see
The rainbow in the bubble!

And senseless too, for Madam Fate
Is not the fickle reprobate
That moody folk have thought her;
My heart leaps up, and I rejoice
As falls upon my ear thy voice,
My little friskful Daughter.

Come hither, Fairy, perch on these
Thy most unworthy father's knees,
And tell him all about it.
Are dolls a sham? Can men be base?
When gazing on thy blessed face
I'm quite prepared to doubt it.

* * * *

Though life is call'd a weary jaunt,
Though earthly joys, the wisest grant,
Have no enduring basis;
It's pleasant (if I must be here!)
To find with Puss, my daughter dear,
A little cool oasis!

Oh, may'st thou some day own, sweet Elf,
A Pet just like thy winsome self,
Her sanguine thoughts to borrow;
Content to use her brighter eyes,
Accept her childish ecstasies,—
If need be, share her sorrow.

The wisdom of thy prattle cheers
My heart; and when, outworn in years,—
When homeward I am starting,
My Darling, lead me gently down
To life's dim strand: the skies may frown,
—But weep not for our parting.

April 1857.

A GARDEN LYRIC

GERALDINE AND I

Di te, Damasippe, deaeque
Verum ob consilium donent tonsore.

We have loiter'd and laugh'd in the flowery
croft,
We have met under wintry skies;
Her voice is the dearest voice, and soft
Is the light in her wistful eyes;
It is bliss in the silent woods, among
Gay crowds, or in any place,
To mould her mind, to gaze in her young
Confiding face.

For ever may roses divinely blow,
And wine-dark pansies charm
By that prim box path where I felt the glow,
Of her dimpled, trusting arm,

And the sweep of her silk as she turn'd and smiled
A smile as pure as her pearls;
The breeze was in love with the darling Child,
And coax'd her curls.

She show'd me her ferns and woodbine sprays,
Foxglove and jasmine stars,
A mist of blue in the beds, a blaze
Of red in the celadon jars:
And velvety bees in convolvulus bells,
And roses of bountiful Spring.
But I said—"Though roses and bees have spells,
They have thorn, and sting."

She show'd me ripe peaches behind a net
As fine as her veil, and fat
Goldfish a-gape, who lazily met
For her crumbs—I grudged them that!
A squirrel, some rabbits with long lop ears,
And guinea-pigs, tortoise-shell—wee;
And I told her that eloquent truth inheres
In all we see.

I lifted her doe by its lops, quoth I,
"Even here deep meaning lies,—
Why have squirrels these ample tails, and why
Have rabbits these prominent eyes?"
She smiled and said, as she twirl'd her veil,
"For some nice little cause, no doubt—
If you lift a guinea-pig up by the tail
His eyes drop out!"

1868.

GERTRUDE'S NECKLACE

As Gertrude skipt from babe to girl,
Her Necklace lengthen'd, pearl by pearl;
Year after year it grew, and grew,
For every birthday gave her two.
Her neck is lovely,—soft and fair,
And now her Necklace glimmers there.

So cradled, let it fall and rise,
And all her graces symbolize.
Perchance this pearl, without a speck,
Once was as warm on Sappho's neck;
Where are the happy, twilight pearls
That braided Beatrice's curls?

Is Gerty loved? Is Gerty loth?
Or, if she's either, is she both?
She's fancy free, but sweeter far
Than many plighted maidens are:
Will Gerty smile us all away,
And still be Gerty? Who can say?

But let her wear her Precious Toy,
And I'll rejoice to see her joy :
Her bauble's only one degree
Less frail, less fugitive than we,
For time, ere long, will snap the skein,
And scatter all her Pearls again.

GERTRUDE'S GLOVE

Elle avait au bout des ses manches
Une paire de mains si blanches!

SLIPS of a kid-skin deftly sewn,
A scent as through her garden blown,
The tender hue that clothes her dove,
All these, and this is Gerty's Glove.

A Glove but lately dofft, for look—
It keeps the happy shape it took
Warm from her touch! What gave the glow?
And where's the Mould that shaped it so?

It clasp'd the hand, so pure, so sleek,
Where Gerty rests a pensive cheek;
The hand that when the light wind stirs,
Reproves those laughing locks of hers.

You Fingers four, you little Thumb!
Were I but you, in days to come
I'd clasp, and kiss,—I'd keep her. Go
And tell her that I told you so.

KISSINGEN, *September* 1871.

THE OLD OAK-TREE AT HATFIELD BROADOAK

A MIGHTY growth! The county side
Lamented when the Giant died,
For England loves her trees:
What misty legends round him cling;
How lavishly he once could fling
His acorns to the breeze!

Who struck a thousand roots in fame,
Who gave the district half its name,
Will not be soon forgotten:
Last spring he show'd but one green bough,
The red leaves hang there yet,—and now
His very props are rotten!

Elate, the thunderbolt he braved,
For centuries his branches waved
A welcome to the blast;
From reign to reign he bore a spell;
No forester had dared to fell
What time has fell'd at last.

The Monarch wore a leafy crown,
And wolves, ere wolves were hunted down,
Found shelter in his gloom;
Unnumber'd squirrels frolick'd free,
Glad music fill'd the gallant Tree
From stem to topmost bloom.

It's hard to say, 'twere vain to seek
When first he ventured forth, a meek
Petitioner for dew;
No Saxon spade disturb'd his root,
The rabbit spared the tender shoot,
And valiantly he grew,

And show'd some inches from the ground
When St. Augustine came and found
Us very proper Vandals:
Then nymphs had bluer eyes than hose;
England then measured men by blows,
And measured time by candles.

The pilgrim bless'd his grateful shade
Ere Richard led the first crusade;
And maidens loved to dance
Where, boy and man, in summer-time,
Chaucer had ponder'd o'er his rhyme;
And Robin Hood, perchance,

Stole hither to Maid Marian;
(Well, if they did not come, one can
At any rate suppose it);
They met beneath the mistletoe,—
We've done the same, and ought to know
The reason why they chose it!

And this was call'd the *Traitor's Branch*,
Stern Warwick hung six yeomen stanch
Along its mighty fork;
Uncivil wars for them! The fair
Red rose and white still bloom, but where
Are Lancaster and York?

Right mournfully his leaves he shed
To shroud the graves of England's dead,
By English falchion slain;
And cheerfully, for England's sake,
He sent his kin to sea with Drake,
When Tudor humbled Spain.

While Blake was fighting with the Dutch
They gave his poor old arms a crutch;
And thrice-four maids and men ate
A meal within his rugged bark,
When Coventry bewitch'd the Park,
And Chatham ruled the Senate.

His few remaining boughs were green,
And dappled sunbeams danced between
Upon the dappled deer,
When, clad in black, two mourners met
To read the Waterloo Gazette,—
They mourn'd their darling here.

They join'd their Boy. The Tree at last
Lies prone, discoursing of the past,
Some fancy-dreams awaking;
At rest, though headlong changes come,
Though nations arm to roll of drum,
And dynasties are quaking.

Romantic Spot! By honest pride
Of old tradition sanctified;
My pensive vigil keeping,
Thy beauty moves me like a spell,
And thoughts, and tender thoughts, upwell,
That fill my heart to weeping.

* * * *

The Squire affirms, with gravest look,
His Oak goes back to Domesday Book:
And some say even higher!

We rode last week to see the Ruin,
We love the fair domain it grew in,
And well we love the Squire.

A nature loyally controll'd,
And fashion'd in that righteous mould
Of English gentleman;
My child some day will read these rhymes,
She loved her "godpapa" betimes,—
The little Christian!

I love the Past, its ripe pleasance,
And lusty thought, and dim romance,—
Its heart-compelling ditties;
But more, these ties, in mercy sent,
With faith and true affection blent,
And, wanting them, I were content
To murmur, "*Nunc dimittis.*"

HALLINGBURY, *April* 1859.

A TERRIBLE INFANT

I RECOLLECT a nurse call'd Ann,
Who carried me about the grass,
And one fine day a fine young man
Came up, and kiss'd the pretty lass:
She did not make the least objection!
Thinks I, "Aha!
When I can talk I'll tell Mamma."
—And that's my earliest recollection.

AT HURLINGHAM

This was dear Willy's brief despatch,
A curt and yet a cordial summons;—
"Do come! I'm in to-morrow's match,
And see us whip the *Faithful Commons*."
We trundled out behind the bays,
Through miles and miles of brick and garden;
Mamma was drest in mauve and maize,—
She let me wear my *Dolly Varden*.

A charming scene, and lively too;
The paddock's full, the band is playing
Boulotte's song in *Barbe bleue*;
And what are all these people saying?
They flirt! they bet! There's Linda Reeves
Too lovely! I'd give worlds to borrow
Her yellow rose with russet leaves!—
I'll wear a yellow rose to-morrow!

And there are May and Algy Meade;
How proud she looks on her promotion!
The ring must be amused indeed,
And edified by such devotion!
I wonder if she ever guessed!—
I wonder if he'll call on Friday!—
I often wonder which is best!—
I only hope my hair is tidy!

Some girls repine, and some rejoice,
And some get bored, but I'm contented
To make my destiny my choice,
I'll never dream that I've repented.
There's something sad in *loved and cross'd*,
For all the fond, fond hope that rings it:
There's something sweet in "Loved and Lost";
And oh, how sweetly Alfred sings it!

I'll own I'm bored with *handicaps*!
Bluerocks! (they always are "*bluerock*"-ing!)—
With May, a little bit, perhaps,—
And yon Faust's *teufelshund* is shocking!
Bang . . bang . . ! That's Willy! There's his bird,
Blithely it cleaves the skies above me!

He's miss'd all ten! He's too absurd!—
I hope he'll always, always love me!

We've lost! To tea, then back to town;
The crowd is laughing, eating, drinking:
The Moon's eternal eyes look down,—
Of what can yon pale Moon be thinking?
Oh, but for some good fairy's wand!
This *Pigeoncide* is worse than silly,
But still I'm very, very fond
Of Hurlingham, and tea,—and Willy.

THE PILGRIMS OF PALL MALL

My little Friend, so small, so neat,
Whom years ago I used to meet
In Pall Mall daily,
How cheerily you tript away
To work, it might have been to play,
You tript so gaily.

And Time trips too! This moral means
You then were midway in the teens
That I was crowning;
We never spoke, but when I smiled
At morn or eve, I know, dear Child,
You were not frowning.

Each morning that we met, I think
One sentiment us two did link,
Not joy—not sorrow;
And then at eve, experience-taught,
Our hearts were lighter for the thought,—
We meet to-morrow!

And you were poor, so poor! and why?
How kind to come, it was for my
Especial grace meant!
Had you a chamber near the stars,—
A bird,—some treasured plants in jars,
About your casement?

I often wander up and down,
When morning bathes the silent town
In dewy glory;
Perhaps, unwitting I have heard
Your thrilling-toned canary-bird
From that third story.

I've seen some change since last we met—
A patient little Seamstress yet,
On small wage striving,
Are you, if Love such luck allows,
Some little fellow's lucky spouse?—
Is Baby thriving?

My heart grows chill! Can Soul like thine,
Weary of this dear world of mine,
Have loosed its fetter,
To find a world, whose promised bliss
Is better than the best of this?—
And is it better?

Sometimes to Pall Mall I repair,
And see the damsels passing there;
But if I try to . . .
To get one glance, they look discreet
As though they'd some one else to meet;—
As have not *I* too?

Yet still I often think upon
Our many meetings, come and gone,
July—December!
Now let us make a tryst, and when,
Dear little Soul, we meet again,
In some more kindly sphere, why then
Thy friend remember.

1856.

AN OLD MUFF

He cannot be complete in aught
Who is not humorously prone,—
A man without a merry thought
Can hardly have a funny bone.

Time has a magic wand!
What is this meets my hand,
Moth-eaten, mouldy, and
Cover'd with fluff?
Faded, and stiff, and scant;
Can it be? no, it can't—
Yes, I declare, it's Aunt
Prudence's Muff!

Years ago, twenty-three,
Old Uncle Doubledee
Gave it to Aunty P.
Laughing and teasing—
"Pru., of the breezy curls,
Question those solemn churls,—
What holds a pretty girl's
Hand without squeezing?"

Uncle was then a lad
Gay, but, I grieve to add,
Sinful, if smoking bad
Baccy's a vice:
Glossy was then this mink
Muff, lined with pretty pink
Satin, which maidens think
"Awfully nice!"

I seem to see again
Aunt in her hood and train,
Glide, with a sweet disdain,
Gravely to Meeting:
Psalm-book and kerchief new,
Peep'd from the Muff of Pru.;
Young men, and pious too,
Giving her greeting.

Sweetly her Sabbath sped
Then; from this Muff, it's said,
Tracts she distributed:—
Converts (till Monday!)
Lured by the grace they lack'd,
Follow'd her. One, in fact,
Ask'd for—and got his tract
Twice of a Sunday!

Love has a potent spell;
Soon this bold *Ne'er-do-well*,
Aunt's too susceptible
Heart undermining,
Slipt, so the scandal runs,
Notes in the pretty nun's
Muff, triple-corner'd ones,
Pink as its lining.

Worse follow'd—soon the jade
Fled (to oblige her blade!)
Whilst her friends thought that they'd
Lock'd her up tightly:
After such shocking games
Aunt is of wedded dames
Gayest, and now her name's
Mrs. Golightly.

In female conduct flaw
Sadder I never saw,
Faith still I've in the law
Of compensation.
Once Uncle went astray,
Smoked, joked, and swore away,
Sworn by he's now, by a
Large congregation.

Changed is the Child of Sin,
Now he's (he once was thin)
Grave, with a double chin,—
Blest be his fat form!
Changed is the garb he wore,
Preacher was never more
Prized than is Uncle for
Pulpit or platform.

If all's as best befits
Mortals of slender wits,
Then beg this Muff and its
Fair owner pardon:
All's for the best, indeed
Such is my simple creed;
Still I must go and weed
Hard in my garden.

1863.

GERALDINE

A SIMPLE Child has claims
On your sentiment, her name's
Geraldine.
Be tender, but beware,—
She's frolicsome as fair,
And fifteen.

She has gifts to grace allied,
And each she has applied,
And improved:
She has bliss that lives and leans
On loving, and that means
She is loved.

Her beauty is refined
By harmony of mind,
And the art,
And the blessed nature, too,
Of a tender, and a true
Little heart.

And yet I mustn't vault
Over any foolish fault
That she owns,
Or others might rebel
And enviously swell
In their zones.

For she's tricksy as the fays,
Or her pussy when it plays
With a string:
She's a goose about her cat,
Her ribbons, and all that
Sort of thing.

These foibles are a blot,
Still she never can do what
Isn't *nice*;
Such as quarrel, and give slaps—
As I've known her get perhaps
Once or twice.

The spells that draw her soul
Are subtle—sad or droll:
She can show
That virtuoso whim
Which consecrates our dim
Long-ago.

A love that is not sham
For Stothard, Blake, and Lamb;
And I've known
Cordelia's sad eyes
Cause angel-tears to rise
In her own.

Her gentle spirit yearns
When she reads of Robin Burns:
Luckless bard!
Had she blossom'd in thy time,
Oh, how rare had been the rhyme
—And reward!

Thrice happy then is he
Who, planting such a Tree,
Sees it bloom
To shelter him; indeed
We have joyance as we speed
To our doom!

I'm happy, having grown
Such a Sapling of my own;
And I crave
No garland for my brows,
But rest beneath its boughs
To the grave.

1864.

AT HER WINDOW

Ah, Minstrel, how strange is
The carol you sing!
Let Psyche, who ranges
The garden of spring,
Remember the changes
December will bring.

Beating Heart! we come again
Where my Love reposes:
This is Mabel's window-pane;
These are Mabel's roses.

Is she nested? Does she kneel
In the twilight stilly,
Lily clad from throat to heel,
She, my virgin Lily?

Soon the wan, the wistful stars,
Fading, will forsake her;
Elves of light, on beamy bars,
Whisper then, and wake her.

Let this friendly pebble plead
  At her flowery grating;
If she hear me will she heed?
  Mabel, I am waiting.

Mabel will be deck'd anon,
  Zoned in bride's apparel;
Happy zone! Oh hark to yon
  Passion-shaken carol!

Sing thy song, thou trancèd thrush
  Pipe thy best, thy clearest;—
Hush, her lattice moves, oh hush,
  Dearest Mabel!—dearest.

ROTTEN ROW.

I HOPE I'm fond of much that's good,
As well as much that's gay;
I'd like the country if I could;
I love the Park in May:
And when I ride in Rotten Row,
I wonder why they call'd it so.

A lively scene on turf and road;
The crowd is bravely drest:
The *Ladies' Mile* has overflow'd,
The chairs are in request:
The nimble air, so soft, so clear,
Can hardly stir a ringlet here.

I'll halt beneath those pleasant trees,—
And drop my bridle-rein,
And, quite alone, indulge at ease
The philosophic vein:
I'll moralise on all I see—
Yes, it was all arranged for me!

Forsooth, and on a livelier spot
The sunbeam never shines.
Fair ladies here can talk and trot
With statesmen and divines:
Could I have chosen, I'd have been
A Duke, a Beauty, or a Dean.

What grooms! What gallant gentlemen!
What well-appointed hacks!
What glory in their pace, and then
What Beauty on their backs!
My Pegasus would never flag
If weighted as my Lady's nag.

But where is now the courtly troop
That once rode laughing by?
I miss the curls of Cantelupe,
The laugh of Lady Di:
They all could laugh from night to morn,
And Time has laugh'd them all to scorn.

I then could frolic in the van
With dukes and dandy earls;
Then I was thought a *nice* young man
By rather *nice* young girls!
I've half a mind to join Miss Browne,
And try one canter up and down.

Ah, no—I'll linger here awhile,
And dream of days of yore;
For me bright eyes have lost the smile,
The sunny smile they wore:—
Perhaps they say, what I'll allow,
That I'm not quite so handsome now.

1867.

A KIND PROVIDENCE

He dropt a tear on Susan's bier,
He seemed a most despairing Swain;
But bluer sky brought newer tie,
And—would he wish her back again?
The moments fly, and when we die,
Will Philly Thistletop complain?
She'll cry and sigh, and—dry her eye,
And let herself be woo'd again.

LOULOU AND HER CAT

Good pastry is vended
In Cité Fadette;
Maison Pons can make splendid
Brioche and *galette.*

M'sieu Pons is so fat that
He's laid on the shelf;
Madame had a Cat that
Was fat as herself.

Long hair, soft as satin,
A musical purr,
'Gainst the window she'd flatten
Her delicate fur.

I drove Lou to see what
Our neighbours were at,
In rapture, cried she, "What
An exquisite Cat!

"What whiskers! She's purring
All over. Regale
Our eyes, *Puss*, by stirring
Thy feathery tail!

"*M'sieu Pons*, will you sell her?"
"*Ma femme est sortie*,
Your offer I'll tell her;
But—will she?" says he.

Yet *Pons* was persuaded
To part with the prize:
(Our bargain was aided,
My Lou, by your eyes!)

From his *légitime* save him,—
My spouse I prefer,
For I warrant *his* gave him
Un mauvais quart d'heure.

I am giving a pleasant
Grimalkin to Lou,
—Ah, *Puss*, what a present
I'm giving to you!

THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD

The characters of great and small
Come ready made, we can't bespeak one;
Their sides are many, too, and all
(Except ourselves) have got a weak one.
Some sanguine people love for life,
Some love their hobby till it flings them.
How many love a pretty wife
For love of the *éclat* she brings them!

* * * *

A little to relieve my mind
I've thrown off this disjointed chatter,
But more because I'm disinclined
To enter on a painful matter:
Once I was bashful; I'll allow
I've blush'd for words untimely spoken;
I still am rather shy, and now . . .
And now the ice is fairly broken.

We all have secrets : you have one
  Which mayn't be quite your charming spouse's ;
We all lock up a Skeleton
  In some grim chamber of our houses ;
Familiars who exhaust their days
  And nights in probing where our smart is,
And who, for all their spiteful ways,
  Are "silent, unassuming *Parties*."

We hug this Phantom we detest,
  Rarely we let it cross our portals :
It is a most exacting guest,
  And we are much afflicted mortals.
Your neighbour Gay, that jovial wight,
  As *Dives* rich, and brave as Hector,
Poor Gay steals twenty times a night,
  On shaking knees, to see his Spectre.

Old *Dives* fears a pauper fate,
  So hoarding is his ruling passion ;—
Some gloomy souls anticipate
  A waistcoat, straiter than the fashion !
She childless pines, that lonely wife,
  And secret tears are bitter shedding ;
Hector may tremble all his life,
  And die,—but not of that he's dreading.

* * * *

Ah me, the World! How fast it spins!
The beldams dance, the caldron bubbles;
They shriek, they stir it for our sins,
And we must drain it for our troubles.
We toil, we groan; the cry for love
Mounts up from this poor seething city,
And yet I know we have above
A FATHER, infinite in pity.

When Beauty smiles, when Sorrow weeps,
Where sunbeams play, where shadows darken,
One inmate of our dwelling keeps
Its ghastly carnival; but hearken!
How dry the rattle of the bones!
That sound was not to make *you* start meant:
Stand by! Your humble servant owns
The Tenant of this Dark Apartment.

AN INVITATION TO ROME, AND THE REPLY

THE INVITATION

Oh, come to Rome, it is a pleasant place,
  Your London sun is here, and smiling brightly;
The Briton, too, puts on his cheery face,
  And *Mrs. Bull* acquits herself politely.
The Romans are an easy-going race,
  With simple wives, more dignified than sprightly;
I see them at their doors, as day is closing,
Prouder than duchesses, and more imposing.

A sweet *far niente* life promotes the graces;
  They pass from dreamy bliss to wakeful glee,
And in their bearing and their speech, one traces
  A breadth, a depth—a grace of courtesy

Not found in busy or inclement places;
Their clime and tongue are much in harmony:
The Cockney met in Middlesex, or Surrey,
Is often cold, and always in a hurry.

Oh, come to Rome, nor be content to read
Of famous palace and of stately street
Whose fountains ever run with joyful speed,
And never-ceasing murmur. Here we greet
Memnon's vast monolith; or, gay with weed,
Rich capitals, as corner stone or seat,
The site of vanish'd temples, where now moulder
Old ruins, masking ruin even older.

Ay, come, and see the statues, pictures, churches,
Although the last are commonplace, or florid.—
Who say 'tis here that superstition perches?
Myself I'm glad the marbles have been quarried.
The sombre streets are worthy your researches
Tho' ways are foul, and lava pavement's horrid.

The pleasant sights, that squeamishness disparages,
Are miss'd by all who roll along in carriages.

I dare not speak of Michael Angelo,
Such theme were all too splendid for my pen:
And if I breathe the name of Sanzio
(The first of painters and of gentlemen),
Is it that love casts out my fear, and so
I claim with him a kindredship? Ah, when
We love, the name is on our hearts engraven,
As is thy name, my own dear Bard of Avon.

Nor is the Coliseum theme of mine,
'Twas built for poet of a larger daring;
The world goes there with torches; I decline
Thus to affront the moonbeams with their flaring.
Some day in May our forces we'll combine
(Just you and I), and try a midnight airing.
And then I'll quote this rhyme to you—and then
You'll muse upon the vanity of men!

Come! We will charter such a pair of nags!
The country's better seen when one is riding:
We'll roam where yellow Tiber speeds or lags
At will. The aqueducts are yet bestriding
With giant march (now whole, now broken crags
With flowers plumed) the swelling and subsiding
Campagna, girt by purple hills afar,
That melt in light beneath the evening star.

A drive to Palestrina will be pleasant;
The wild fig grows where erst her rampart stood;
There oft, in goat-skin clad, a sunburnt peasant
Like Pan comes frisking from his ilex wood,
And seems to wake the past time in the present.
Fair *contadina*, mark his mirthful mood;
No antique satyr he. The nimble fellow
Can join with jollity your *saltarello*.

Old sylvan peace and liberty! The breath
Of life to unsophisticated man,

Here Mirth may pipe, Love here may weave
his wreath,
"*Per dar' al mio bene.*" When you can,
Come share their leafy solitudes. Pale Death
And time are grudging of our little span:
Wan Time speeds lightly o'er the changing
corn,
Death grins from yonder cynical old thorn.

Oh, come! I send a leaf of April fern,
It grew where beauty lingers round decay:
Ashes long buried in a sculptured urn
Are not more dead than Rome—so dead
to-day!
That better time, for which the patriots yearn,
Delights the gaze, again to fade away.
They wait, they pine for what is long denied,
And thus wait I till thou art by my side.

Thou'rt far away! Yet, while I write, I still
Seem gently, Sweet, to clasp thy hand in
mine;
I cannot bring myself to drop the quill,
I cannot yet thy little hand resign!
The plain is fading into darkness chill,

The Sabine peaks are flush'd with light
divine,
I watch alone, my fond thought wings to
thee;
Oh, come to Rome. Oh come,—oh come
to me!

1863.

THE REPLY

Dear Exile, I was proud to get
Your rhyme, I've "laid it up in cotton";
You know that you are all to "*Pet*,"—
I fear'd that I was quite forgotten!
Mamma, who scolds me when I mope,
Insists, and she is wise as gentle,
That I am still in love! I hope
That you feel rather sentimental!

Perhaps you think your *Love forlore*
Should pine unless her slave be with her;
Of course you're fond of Rome, and more—
Of course you'd like to coax me thither!

Che! quit this dear delightful maze
Of calls and balls, to be intensely
Discomfited in fifty ways—
I like your confidence, immensely!

Some girls who love to ride and race,
And live for dancing, like the Bruens,
Confess that Rome's a charming place—
In spite of all the stupid ruins!
I think it might be sweet to pitch
One's tent beside those reeds of Tiber,
And all that sort of thing, of which
Dear Hawthorne's "quite" the best describer.

To see stone pines and marble gods
In garden alleys red with roses;
The Perch where Pio Nono nods;
The Church where Raphael reposes.
Make pleasant *giros*—when we may;
Jump *stagionate* (where they're easy!)
And play croquet; the Bruens say
There's turf behind the Ludovisi!

I'll bring my books, though Mrs. Mee
Says packing books is such a worry;
I'll bring my *Golden Treasury*,
Manzoni, and, of course a "Murray"!

Your verses (if you so advise!)
  A Dante—Auntie owns a quarto;
I'll try and buy a smaller size,
  And read him on the *Muro Torto*.

But can I go? *La Madre* thinks
  It would be such an undertaking!
(I wish we could consult a sphinx!)
  The very thought has left her quaking!
Papa (we do not mind papa)
  Has got some "notice" of some "motion,"
And could not stay; but, why not,—ah,
  I've not the very slightest notion!

The Browns have come to stay a week,
  They've brought the boys—I haven't thank'd 'em;
For Baby *Grand*, and Baby *Pic*,
  Are playing cricket in my sanctum!
Your *Rover*, too, affects my den,
  And when I pat the dear old whelp, it . . .
It makes me think of *You*, and then . . .
  And then I cry—I cannot help it.

Ah yes, before you left me, ere
  The cloud that cleft us was impending,

These eyes had seldom shed a tear,
I thought my joy could have no ending!
But cloudlets gather'd soon, and this—
This was the first that rose to grieve me;—
To know that I possess'd the bliss,—
For then I knew such bliss might leave me!

My strain is sad, yet, oh, believe
Your words have made my spirit better;
And if, perhaps, at times I grieve,
I'd meant to write a cheery letter;
But skies were dull; Rome sounded hot,
I fancied I could live without it:
I thought I'd go, I thought I'd not,
And then I thought I'd think about it.

The sun now glances o'er the park,
If tears are on my cheek, they glitter;
I think I've kiss'd your rhyme, for hark,
My *bulley* gives a saucy twitter!
Your blessed words extinguish doubt,
A sudden breeze is gaily blowing;
And hark! The Minster bells ring out—
She ought to go. Of course she's going!

1863.

TO MY MISTRESS

His musings were trite, and their burthen, forsooth,
The wisdom of age and the folly of youth.

Marquise, I see the flying year,
And feel how Time is wasting here:
Ay more, he soon his worst will do,
And garner all your roses too.

It pleases Time to fold his wings
Around our best and fairest things;
He'll mar your blooming cheek, as now
He stamps his mark upon my brow.

The same mute planets rise and shine
To rule your days and nights as mine:
Once I was young and gay, and see! . . .
What I am now you soon will be.

And yet I vaunt a certain charm
That shields me from your worst alarm,
And bids me gaze, with front sublime,
On all these ravages of Time.

You boast a gift that blooms and dies,
I boast a gift that change defies:
For mine will still be mine, and last
When all your pride of beauty's past.

My gift will long embalm the lures
Of eyes—ah, sweet to me as yours:
For ages hence the great and good
Will judge you as I choose they should.

In days to come the peer or clown,
With whom I still shall win renown,
Will only know that you were fair
Because I chanced to say you were.

Proud Lady! Scornful beauty mocks
At aged heads and silver locks;
But think awhile before you fly
Or spurn a Poet such as I.

KENWOOD, *July* 21, 1864.

CIRCUMSTANCE

THE ORANGE

It ripen'd by the river banks,
Where, mask and moonlight aiding,
Dons *Blas* and *Juan* play their pranks,
Dark Donnas serenading.

By Moorish damsel it was pluck'd,
Beneath the golden day there;
By swain 'twas then in London suck'd,
Who flung the peel away there.

He could not know in Pimlico,
As little she in Seville,
That *I* should reel upon that peel,
And—wish them at the devil.

1856.

YORICK'S FUNERAL

* * * * *

That day, will there be one to shed
  A tear behind the hearse?
Or cry, "Poor *Yorick*, are you dead?
  I could have spared a worse:
We never spoke; we never met;
I never heard your voice, and yet
  I loved you for your verse"?
Such love would make the flowers wave
In gladness on their Poet's Grave.

A few, few years, like one short week,
  Will pass, and leave behind
A Stone moss-grown, that none will seek,
  And none would care to find.
Then I shall sleep, and gain release
In perfect rest—the perfect peace
  For which my soul has pined;
And still some Fool will laugh and weep—
A weary Fool who sues for sleep.

CUPID ON THE CROSSING

Her eyes and her hair
Are superb;
She stands in despair
On the kerb.
Quick, Stranger, advance
To her aid:
She's across, with a glance
You're repaid.
She's fair, and you're tall,
Fal-lal-la!—
What will come of it all?
Chi lo sa!

PICCADILLY

PICCADILLY! Shops, palaces, bustle, and breeze,
The whirring of wheels, and the murmur of trees;
By night or by day, whether noisy or stilly,
Whatever my mood is, I love Piccadilly.

Wet nights, when the gas on the pavement is streaming,
And young Love is watching, and old Love is dreaming,
And Beauty is whirling to conquest, where shrilly
Cremona makes nimble thy toes, Piccadilly!

Bright days, when a stroll is my afternoon wont
And I meet all the people I do know, or don't:

Here is jolly old Brown, and his fair daughter
Lillie—
No wonder, young Pilgrim, you like Piccadilly!

See yonder pair riding, how fondly they
saunter,
She smiles on her Poet, whose heart's in a
canter!
Some envy her spouse, and some covet her
filly,
He envies them both,—he's an ass, Piccadilly!

Now were I such a bride, with a slave at my
feet,
I would choose me a house in my favourite
street;
Yes or no—I would carry my point, willy-
nilly:
If "no,"—pick a quarrel; if "yes"—Piccadilly!

From Primrose balcony, long ages ago,
"Old Q." sat at gaze,—who now passes
below?

A frolicsome statesman, the Man of the Day;
A laughing philosopher, gallant and gay;

Never darling of fortune more manfully trod,
Full of years, full of fame, and the world at his nod,
Can the thought reach his heart, and then leave it more chilly—
Old P. or old Q.,—"I must quit Piccadilly"?

Life is chequer'd; a patchwork of smiles and of frowns;
We value its ups, let us muse on its downs;
There's a side that is bright, it will then turn us t'other,
One turn, if a good one, deserves yet another.
These downs are delightful, these ups are not hilly,—
Let us try one more turn ere we quit Piccadilly.

A *NICE* CORRESPONDENT

"There are plenty of roses" (the patriarch speaks)
"Alas not for me, on your lips and your cheeks;
Fair maiden rose-laden enough and to spare,
Spare, spare me that rose that you wear in your hair.

THE glow and the glory are plighted
To darkness, for evening is come;
The lamp in Glebe Cottage is lighted,
The birds and the sheep-bells are dumb.
I'm alone, for the others have flitted
To dine with a neighbour at Kew:
Alone, but I'm not to be pitied—
I'm thinking of you!

I wish you were here! Were I duller
Than dull, you'd be dearer than dear;
I am drest in your favourite colour—
Dear Fred, how I wish you were here!
I am wearing my lazuli necklace,
The necklace you fasten'd askew!
Was there ever so rude or so reckless
A Darling as you?

I want you to come and pass sentence
On two or three books with a plot;
Of course you know "Janet's Repentance"?
I am reading Sir *Waverley* Scott.
That story of Edgar and Lucy,
How thrilling, romantic, and true!
The Master (his bride *was* a goosey!)
Reminds me of you.

They tell me Cockaigne has been crowning
A Poet whose garland endures;—
It was you that first told me of Browning,—
That stupid old Browning of yours!
His vogue and his verve are alarming,
I'm anxious to give him his due,
But, Fred, he's not nearly so charming
A Poet as you!

I heard how you shot at The Beeches,
I saw how you rode *Chanticleer*,
I have read the report of your speeches,
And echo'd the echoing cheer:
There's a whisper of hearts you are breaking,
Dear Fred, I believe it, I do!
Small marvel that Folly is making
Her Idol of you!

Alas for the World, and its dearly
  Bought triumph,—its fugitive bliss;
Sometimes I half wish I were merely
  A plain or a penniless Miss;
But, perhaps, one is best with "a measure
  Of pelf," and I'm not sorry, too,
That I'm pretty, because it's a pleasure,
    My Darling, to you!

Your whim is for frolic and fashion,
  Your taste is for letters and art;—
This rhyme is the commonplace passion
  That glows in a fond woman's heart:
Lay it by in some sacred deposit
  For relics—we all have a few!
Love, some day they'll print it, because it
    Was written to You.

1868.

MY SONG

You ask a Song,
Such as of yore, an autumn's eventide,
Some blest Boy-Poet caroll'd,—and then died.
Nay, *I* have sung too long.

Say, shall I fling
A sigh to Beauty at her window-pane?
I sang there once, may not I once again?
Or tell me whom to sing.

—The peer of Peers?
Lord of the wealth that gives his time employ:
Time to possess, but hardly to enjoy—
He cannot need *my* tears.

—The man of *Mind*
Or Priest who darken what was never day?
I cannot sing them, yet I will not say
Such guides are wholly blind.

—The Orator?
He quiet lies where yon fresh hillock heaves:
'Twere well to sprinkle there those laurel-leaves
He won, but never wore.

Or shall I twine
The Cypress? Wreath of glory and of gloom.—
To march a gallant Soldier to his doom
Needs fuller voice than mine.

No Lay have I,
No murmur'd measure meet for your delight,
No Song of Love and Death, to make you quite
Forget that we must die.

Something is wrong;
The World is over-wise; or, more's the pity,
These days are far too serious for a Ditty,
Yet take it,—take My Song.

1876.

REPLY TO A LETTER ENCLOSING A LOCK OF HAIR

She laugh'd—she climb'd the giddy height;
I held that climber small;
I even held her rather tight,
For fear that she should fall.
A dozen girls were chirping round,
Like five-and-twenty linnets;—
I must have held her, I'll be bound,
Some five-and-twenty minutes.

Yes, you were false, and, though I'm free,
I still would be that slave of yore;
Then, join'd, our years were thirty-three,
And now,—yes now I'm thirty-four.
And though you were not learnèd . . . well,
I was not anxious you should grow so;—
I trembled once beneath her spell
Whose spelling was extremely so-so.

Bright season! why will Memory
Still haunt the path our rambles took;

The sparrow's nest that made you cry,
  The lilies captured in the brook?
I'd lifted you from side to side,
  You seem'd as light as that poor sparrow;
I know who wish'd it twice as wide,—
  I think *you* thought it rather narrow.

Time was, indeed a little while,
  My pony could your heart compel;
And once, beside the meadow-stile,
  I thought you loved me just as well;
I'd kiss'd your cheek; in sweet surprise
  Your troubled gaze said plainly, "Should he?"
But doubt soon fled those daisy eyes,—
  "He could not mean to vex me, could he?"

The brightest eyes are soonest sad,
  But your rose cheek, so lightly sway'd,
Could ripple into dimples glad;
  For oh, fair Friend, what mirth we made!
The brightest tears are soonest dried,
  But your young love and dole were stable;
You wept when dear old *Rover* died,
  You wept—and dress'd your dolls in sable.

As year succeeds to year, the more
Imperfect life's fruition seems;
Our dreams, as baseless as of yore,
Are not the same enchanting dreams.
The girls I love now vote me slow,
How dull the boys who once seem'd witty!
Perhaps I'm growing old, I know
I'm still romantic, more's the pity.

Vain the regret! To few, perchance,
Unknown, and profitless to all:
The wisely-gay, as years advance,
Are gaily-wise. Whate'er befall,
We'll laugh at folly, whether seen
Beneath a chimney or a steeple;
At yours, at mine—our own, I mean,
As well as that of other people.

I'm fond of fun, the mental dew
Where wit, and truth, and ruth are blent;
And yet I've known a prig or two,
Who, wanting all, were all content!
To say I hate such dismal men
Might be esteem'd a strong assertion;
If I've blue devils, now and then,
I make them dance for my diversion.

And here's your letter debonair—
"*My Friend, my dear old Friend of yore,*"
And is this curl your daughter's hair?
I've seen the Titian tint before.
Are we the pair that used to pass
Long days beneath the chestnut shady?
You then were such a pretty lass;
I'm told you're now as fair a lady.

* * * *

I've laugh'd to hide the tear I shed,
As when the jester's bosom swells,
And mournfully he shakes his head,
We hear the jingle of his bells.
A jesting vein your poet vex'd,
And this poor rhyme, the Fates determine,
Without a parson or a text,
Has proved a rather prosy sermon.

1859.

FROM THE CRADLE

They tell me I was born a long
Three months ago,
But whether they be right or wrong
I hardly know.
I sleep, I smile, I cannot crawl,
But I can cry:
At present I am rather small—
A Babe am I.

The changing lights of sun and shade
Are baby toys;
The flowers and birds are not afraid
Of baby-boys.
Some day I'll wish that I could be
A bird, and fly;
At present I can't wish—you see
A Babe am I.

A RHYME OF ONE

You sleep upon your mother's breast,
Your race begun,
A welcome, long a wish'd-for Guest,
Whose age is one.

A Baby-Boy, you wonder why
You cannot run;
You try to talk—how hard you try!
You're only One.

Ere long you won't be such a dunce;
You'll eat your bun,
And fly your kite, like folk, who once
Were only One.

You'll rhyme and woo, and fight and joke,
Perhaps you'll pun!
Such feats are never done by folk
Before they're One.

Some day, too, you may have your joy,
And envy none;
Yes, you, yourself, may own a Boy,
Who isn't One.

He'll dance, and laugh, and crow; he'll do
As you have done:
(You crown a happy home, though you
Are only One).

But when he's grown shall you be here
To share his fun,
And talk of times when he (the Dear!)
Was hardly One?

Dear Child, 'tis your poor lot to be
My little Son;
I'm glad, though I am old, you see,—
While you are One.

1876.

THE TWINS

YES, there they lie, so small, so quaint,
  Two mouths, two noses, and two chins;
What Painter shall we get to paint
  And glorify the Twins,
To give us all the charm that dwells
In tiny cloaks and coral-bells,
And all those other pleasant spells
Of Babyhood? and not forget
The silver mug for either Pet—
  No babe should be without it.
Come, Limner Kate! for you can thrill
Our hearts with pink and daffodil,
And white rosette, and dimpled frill;
Come, paint our little Jack and Jill,
  And don't be long about it.

LITTLE DINKY

(A RHYME OF LESS THAN ONE)

THE hair she means to have is gold,
Her eyes are blue, she's twelve weeks old,
Plump are her fists and pinky.
She flutter'd down in lucky hour
From some blue deep in yon sky bower—
I call her LITTLE DINKY.

A Tiny now, ere long she'll please
To totter at my parent-knees,
And crow, and try to chatter:
And then she'll come to fair white frocks,
And frisk about in shoes and socks,—
Her totter changed to patter.

And soon she'll play, ay, soon enough,
At cowslip-ball and blindman's buff;
And, some day, we shall find her
Grow weary of her toys, indeed

She'll fling them all aside to heed
A footstep close behind her!

So be it: may They both be rich
In all that's best—the joys with which
True-love can aye supply them—
Then, hand in hand, they'll sit them down
Right cheerfully, and let the Town,
This foolish Town, go by them.

Dinky, I soon must pass the toys,
I've loved so well, to younger boys—
For I have had my warning.
Farewell to all the dear delight!
Content am I to say *Goodnight*,
And hope for better morning.

* * *

As I was climbing Ludgate Hill
I met a goose who dropt a quill,
You see my thumb is inky;
I fell to scribble there and then,
And this is how I came to pen,
This rhyme on LITTLE DINKY.

1878.

ANY POET TO HIS LOVE

Immortal Verse! Is mine the strain
To last and live? As ages wane
Will one be found to twine the bays,
Or praise me then as now you praise?

Will there be one to praise? Ah no!
My laurel leaf may never grow;
My bust is in the quarry yet,
Oblivion weaves my coronet.

Immortal for a month—a week!
The garlands wither as I speak;
The song will die, the harp's unstrung,
But, singing, have I vainly sung?

You deign'd to lend an ear the while
I trill'd my lay. I won your smile.
Now, let it die, or let it live,—
My verse was all I had to give.

The linnet flies on wistful wings,
And finds a bower, and lights and sings;
Enough if my poor verse endures
To light and live—to die in yours.

1875.

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

A FRIENDLY bird with bosom red
Is fluting near my garden seat;
Your sky is fair above my head,
And Tweed rejoices at my feet.

The squirrels gambol in the oak,
Here all is glad, but you prefer
To linger on amid the smoke
Of stony-hearted Westminster.

Again I read your letter through,—
"*How wonderful is fate's decree,*
How sweet is all your life to you,
And oh, how sad is mine to me."

I know your wail, who knows it not?—
He gave,—He taketh that He gave.
Yours is the lot, the common lot,
To go down weeping to the grave.

Sad journey to a dark abyss,
Meet ending of your sorrow keen,—
The burden of my dirge is this,
And this my woe,—*It might have been!*

Dear bird! Blithe bird that singst in frost,
Forgive my friend if he is sad;
He mourns what he has only lost,—
I weep what I have never had.

LEES, *September* 27, 1873.

THE CUCKOO

We heard it calling, clear and low,
That tender April morn; we stood
And listened in the quiet wood,
We heard it, ay, long years ago.

It came, and with a strange, sweet cry,
A friend, but from a far-off land;
We stood and listened, hand in hand,
And heart to heart, my Love and I.

In dreamland then we found our joy,
And so it seem'd as 'twere the Bird
That Helen in old times had heard
At noon beneath the oaks of Troy.

O time far off, and yet so near!
It came to her in that hush'd grove,
It warbled while the wooing throve,
It sang the song she loved to hear.

And now I hear its voice again,
And still its message is of peace,
It sings of love that will not cease—
For me it never sings in vain.

TO LINA OSWALD

(AGED FIVE YEARS)

I TUMBLE out of bed betimes
To make my love these toddling rhymes;
And meet the hour, and meet the place
To bless her blithe good-morning face.
I send her all this heart can store;
I seem to see her as before,
An angel-child, divinely fair,
With meek blue eyes, and golden hair,
Curls tipt with changing light, that shed
A little glory round her head.

Has poet ever sung or seen a
Sweeter, wiser child than Lina?
Blue are her sash and snood, and blue's
The hue of her bewitching shoes;
But, saving these, she's virgin dight,
A happy creature clad in white.

Again she stands beneath the boughs,
Reproves the pup, and feeds the cows;
Unvexed by rule, unscared by ill,
She wanders at her *own sweet will*
For what grave fiat could confine
My little charter'd libertine,
Yet free from feeling or from seeing
The burthen of her moral being?

But change must come, and forms and dyes
Will change before her changing eyes;
She'll learn to blush, and hope, and fear—
And where shall I be then, my dear?

Little gossip, set apart
But one small corner of thy heart;
There still is one not quite employ'd,
So let me find and fill that void;
Run then, and jump, and laugh, and play,
But love me though I'm far away.

BROOMHALL, *September*, 1868.

MY MISTRESS'S BOOTS

She has dancing eyes and ruby lips,
Delightful boots—and away she skips.

They nearly strike me dumb,—
I tremble when they come
Pit-a-pat:
This palpitation means
These Boots are Geraldine's—
Think of that!

O, where did hunter win
So delicate a skin
For her feet?
You lucky little kid,
You perish'd, so you did,
For my Sweet.

The faery stitching gleams
On the sides, and in the seams,
And reveals

That the Pixies were the wags
Who tipt these funny tags,
And these heels.

What soles to charm an elf!—
Had Crusoe, sick of self,
Chanced to view
One printed near the tide,
O, how hard he would have tried
For the two!

For Gerry's debonair,
And innocent and fair
As a rose;
She's an Angel in a frock,—
She's an Angel with a clock
To her hose!

The simpletons who squeeze
Their pretty toes to please
Mandarins,
Would positively flinch
From venturing to pinch
Geraldine's!

Cinderella's *lefts and rights*
To Geraldine's were frights:
And I trow
The Damsel, deftly shod,
Has dutifully trod
Until now.

Come, Gerry, since it suits
Such a pretty Puss (in Boots)
These to don,
Set your dainty hand awhile
On my shoulder, Dear, and I'll
Put them on.

ALBURY, *June* 29, 1864.

THE REASON WHY

Ask why I love the roses fair,
And whence they come and whose they were;
They come from her, and not alone,—
They bring her sweetness with their own.

Or ask me why I love her so;
I know not: this is all I know,
These roses bud and bloom, and twine
As she round this fond heart of mine.

And this is why I love the flowers,
Once they were hers, they're mine—they're ours!
I love her, and they soon will die,
And now you know the Reason Why.

A WINTER FANTASY

Your veil is thick, and none would know
The pretty face it quite obscures;
But if you foot it through the snow,
Distrust those little boots of yours.

The tell-tale snow, a sparkling mould,
Says where they go and whence they came,
Lightly they touch its carpet cold,
And where they touch they sign your name.

She pass'd beneath yon branches bare:
How fair her face, and how content!
I only know her face was fair,—
I only know she came and went.

Pipe, robins, pipe; though boughs be bleak
Ye are her winter choristers;
Whose cheek will press that rose-cold cheek?
What lips those fresh young lips of hers?

THE HOUSEMAID

Wistful she stands—and yet resign'd,
She watches by the window-blind
Poor Girl. No doubt
The folk that pass despise thy lot:
Thou canst not stir, because 'tis not
Thy *Sunday out.*

To play a game of hide and seek
With dust and cobweb all the week
Small pleasure yields:
Oh dear, how nice it were to drop
One's pen and ink—one's pail and mop;
And scour the fields.

Poor Bodies few such pleasures know;
Seldom they come. How soon they go!
But Souls can roam;
For, lapt in visions airy-sweet,
She sees in this unlovely street
Her far-off home.

The street is now no street! She pranks
A purling brook with thymy banks.
In Fancy's realm
Yon post supports no lamp, aloof
It spreads above her parents' roof,—
A gracious elm.

A father's aid, a mother's care,
And life for her was happy there:
But here, in thrall
She waits, and dreams, and fondly dreams,
And fondly smiles on One who seems
More dear than all.

Her dwelling-place I can't disclose!
Suppose her fair, her name suppose
Is *Car*, or *Kitty*;
She may be *Jane*—she might be plain—
For must the Subject of my strain
Be always pretty?

* * *

Oft on a cloudless afternoon
Of budding May and leafy June,
Fit Sunday weather,

I pass thy window by design,
And wish thy Sunday out and mine
Might fall together.

For sweet it were thy lot to dower
With one brief joy: a white-robed flower
That prude or preacher
Hardly could deem it were unmeet
To lay on thy poor path, thou sweet,
Forlorn young Creature.

* * *

But if her thought on wooing run
And if her Sunday-Swain is one
Who's fond of strolling,
She'd like my nonsense less than his,
And so it's better as it is—
And that's consoling.

1864.

HEINE TO HIS MISTRESS

What do the violets ail,
So wan, so shy?
Why are the roses pale?
Oh why? Oh why?

The lark sad music makes
To sullen skies;
From yonder flowery brakes
Dead odours rise.

Why is the sun's new birth
A dawn of gloom?
Oh why is this fair earth
My joyless tomb?

I wait apart and sigh,
I call to thee;
Why, Heart's-belovèd, why
Didst thou leave me?

1876.

THE BEAR PIT

IN THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

It seems that poor Bruin has never had peace
'Twixt bald men in Bethel, and wise men in grease.
OLD ADAGE.

WE liked the Bear's serio-comical face,
As he loll'd with a lazy, a lumbering grace;
Said Slyboots to me (as if *she* had got none),
"Papa, let's give Bruin a bit of your bun."

Says I, "A plum bun might please wistful old Bruin,
He can't eat the stone that the cruel boy threw in;
Stick *yours* on the point of mamma's parasol,
And then he will climb to the top of the pole.

"Some Bears have got two legs, and some have got more,
Be good to old Bears if they've no legs or four;

Of duty to age you should never be careless,—
My dear, I am bald, and I soon shall be hairless!

"The gravest aversion exists among Bears
From rude forward persons who give themselves airs,
We know how some graceless young people were maul'd
For plaguing a Prophet, and calling him *bald*.

"Strange ursine devotion! Their dancing-days ended,
Bears die to '*remove*' what, in life, they defended:
They succour'd the Prophet, and, since that affair,
The bald have a painful regard for the bear."

My Moral! Small people may read it, and run.
(The Child has my moral—the Bear has my bun.)

THE OLD STONEMASON

A SHOWERY day in early spring,
An Old Man and a Child
Are seated near a scaffolding,
Where marble blocks are piled.

His clothes are stain'd by age and soil,
As hers by rain and sun;
He looks as if his days of toil
Were very nearly done.

To eat his dinner he had sought
A staircase proud and vast,
And here the duteous Child had brought
His scanty noon repast.

A worn-out Workman needing aid:
A blooming Child of Light;
The stately palace steps;—all made
A most pathetic sight.

We had sought shelter from the storm,
And saw this lowly Pair,—
But none could see a Shining Form
That watch'd beside them there.

1874.

THE MUSIC PALACE

Shall you go? I don't ask you to seek it or shun it;
I went on an impulse: I've been and I've done it.

So this is a Music-hall, easy and free,
A temple for singing, and dancing, and
spree;
The band is at *Faust*, and the benches are
filling,
And all that I have can be had for a shilling.

The senses are charm'd by the sights and
the sounds;
A spirit of affable gladness abounds:
With zest we applaud, and as madly recall
The singer, the *cellar-flap-dancer*, and all.

A clown sings a song, and a fay cuts a caper,
And soon disappears in a rose-colour'd
vapour:

Then an imp on a rope is a painfully-pleasant
Sensation for all the mammas that are present.

But who is the Damsel that smiles to me there
With so reckless, indeed, so defiant an air?
She is bright—that she's pretty is more than I'll say.
Is she happy? At least she's exceedingly gay.

* * * * *

It seems to me now, as we pass up the street,
Is Nell worse than I, or the worthies we meet?
She is reckless, her conduct's exceedingly sad—
A coin may be light, but it need not be bad.

Heaven help thee, poor Child: now a graceless and gay Thing,
You once were your Mother's, her pet and her plaything:

Where was your home? Are the stars that
look down
On that home, the cold stars of this pitiless
Town?

The stars are a riddle we never may read,
I prest her poor hand, and I bade her *God-speed*!
She left me a heart overladen with sorrow—
You may hear Nelly's laugh at the palace to-
morrow!

Ah! some go to revel, and some go to rue,
For some go to ruin. There's Paul's tolling
two.

MRS. SMITH

Heigh-ho! they're wed. The cards are dealt,
Our frolic games are o'er;
I've laugh'd, and fool'd, and loved. I've felt—
As I shall feel no more!
Yon little thatch is where she lives,
Yon spire is where she met me;—
I think that if she quite forgives,
She cannot quite forget me.

Last year I trod these fields with Di,—
Fields fresh with clover and with rye;
They now seem arid:
Then Di was fair and single; how
Unfair it seems on me, for now
Di's fair—and married!

A blissful swain—I scorn'd the song
Which tells us though young Love is strong,
The Fates are stronger:
Then breezes blew a boon to men,
The buttercups were bright, and then
This grass was longer.

That day I saw and much esteem'd
Di's ankles, that the clover seem'd
Inclined to smother:
It twitch'd, and soon untied (for fun)
The ribbons of her shoes, first one,
And then the other.

I'm told that virgins augur some
Misfortune if their shoe-strings come
To grief on *Friday*:
And so did Di,—and then her pride
Decreed that shoe-strings so untied
Are "so untidy!"

Of course I knelt; with fingers deft
I tied the right, and tied the left:
Says Di, "This stubble
Is very stupid!—as I live
I'm quite ashamed! . . . I'm shock'd to give
You so much trouble!"

For answer I was fain to sink
To what we all would say and think
Were Beauty present:

"Don't mention such a simple act—
A trouble? not the least! In fact
It's rather pleasant!"

I trust that Love will never tease
Poor little Di, or prove that he's
A graceless rover.
She's happy now as *Mrs. Smith*—
And less polite when walking with
Her chosen lover!

Heigh-ho! Although no moral clings
To Di's blue eyes, and sandal strings,
We had our quarrels.
I think that Smith is thought an ass,—
I know that when they walk in grass
She wears *balmorals*.

1864.

THE OLD GOVERNMENT CLERK

(OLD STYLE)

We knew an old Scribe, it was "once on a time,"
An era to set sober datists despairing:
Then let them despair! Darby sat in a chair
Near the Cross that took name from the Village of Charing.

Though silent and lean, Darby was not malign,
What hair he had left was more silver than sable;
He had also contracted a curve in the spine,
From bending too constantly over a table.

His pay and expenditure, quite in accord,
Were both on the strictest economy founded;

His rulers were known as the Sealing-wax
Board,—
They ruled where red-tape and snug places
abounded.

In his heart he look'd down on this dignified
Knot;
And why? The forefather of one of these
senators—
A rascal concern'd in the Gunpowder Plot—
Had been barber-surgeon to Darby's
progenitors.

Poor fool! is not life a vagary of luck?
For thirty long years of genteel destitution
He'd been writing despatches; which means
he had stuck
Some heads and some tails to much
circumlocution.

This sounds rather weary and dreary; but,
no!
Though strictly inglorious, his days were
quiescent;
His red-tape was tied in a true-lover's bow
Every night when returning to Rosemary
Crescent.

There Joan meets him smiling, the Young Ones are there;
His coming is bliss to the half-dozen wee Things;
The dog and the cat have a greeting to spare,
And Phyllis, neat-handed, is laying the tea-things.

East wind, sob eerily! Sing, kettle, cheerily
Baby's abed, but its Father will rock it;—
His little ones boast their permission to toast
The cake that good fellow brings home in his pocket.

This greeting the silent Old Clerk understands,
Now his friends he can love, had he foes he could mock them;
So met, so surrounded, his bosom expands,—
Some hearts have more need of such homes to unlock them.

And Darby at least is resign'd to his lot;
And Joan, rather proud of the sphere he's adorning,

Has well-nigh forgotten that Gunpowder Plot,—
And *he* won't recall it till ten the next morning.

* * * *

A day must be near when, in pitiful case,
He will drop from his *Branch*, like a fruit more than mellow;
Is he yet to be found in his usual place?
Or is he already forgotten? Poor Fellow!
If still at his duty he soon will arrive;
He passes this turning because it is shorter;
He always is here as the clock's going five!—
Where is He? . . Ah, it is chiming the quarter!

1856.

GERALDINE GREEN

I.

THE SERENADE

Light slumber is quitting
  The eyelids it prest;
The fairies are flitting,
  That lull'd thee to rest.
Where night dews were falling,
  Now feeds the wild bee;
The starling is calling,
  My Darling, for thee.

The wavelets are crisper
  That thrill the shy fern;
The leaves fondly whisper,
  "We wait thy return."
Arise then, and hazy
  Regrets from thee fling,
For sorrows that crazy
  To-morrows may bring.

A vague yearning smote us,
But wake not to weep;
My bark, Love, shall float us,
Across the still deep,
To isles where the lotus
Erst lull'd thee to sleep.

1861.

II.

MY LIFE IS A ——

At Worthing, an exile from Geraldine G——,
How aimless, how wretched an Exile is he!
Promenades are not even prunella and leather
To lovers, if lovers can't foot them together.

He flies the parade, by the ocean he stands;
He traces a "Geraldine G." on the sands;
Only "G.!" though her loved patronymic is
"Green,"——
"I will not betray thee, my own Geraldine."

The fortunes of men have a time and a tide,
And Fate, the old Fury, will not be denied;

That name was, of course, soon wiped out by
the sea,—
She jilted the Exile, did Geraldine G.

They meet, but they never have spoken since
that;
He hopes she is happy,—he knows she is fat;
She woo'd on the shore, now is wed in the
Strand;
And *I*—it was I wrote her name on the sand.

1854.

DU RYS DE MADAME D'ALLEBRET

How fair those locks which now the light
wind stirs!
What eyes she has, and what a perfect arm!
And yet methinks that little Laugh of hers—
That little Laugh is still her crowning
charm.
Where'er she passes, countryside or town,
The streets make festa, and the fields
rejoice.
Should sorrow come, as 't will, to cast me
down,
Or Death, as come he must, to hush my
voice,
Her Laugh would wake me, just as now it
thrills me—
That little giddy Laugh wherewith she kills
me.

THE LADY I LOVE

THE Lady I sing is as charming as Spring,
I own that I love the dear Lady I sing:
She is gay, she is sad, she is good, she is fair,
She lives at a Number in O——— Square.

It is not 21, it is not 23—
You never shall get at her Number from me;
If you did, very soon you'd be mounting the stair
Of Number (no matter what!) O——— Square.

They say she is clever. Indeed it is said
She is making a Novel right out of her Head!
That poor little Head! If her Heart were to spare
I'd break, and I'd mend it in O——— Square.

I've a heart of my own, and, in prose as in
rhymes,
This heart has been fractured a good many
times;
An excellent heart, tho' in sorry repair—
Little Friend, may I mend it in O———
Square?

"*What nonsense you talk.*" Yes, but still I
am one
Who feels pretty grave when he seems full of
fun;
Some people are pretty, and yet full of care—
And Some One is pretty in O——— Square.

I know I am singing in old-fashioned phrase
The music that pleased in the old-fashion'd
days;
Alas, I know, too, I've an old-fashion'd air—
Oh, why did I ever see O——— Square!

POSTSCRIPT

The writer of prose, by intelligence taught,
Says the thing that will please, in the way that he
ought,
But your poor despised Bard, who by Nature is blest,
(In the scope of a couplet, or guise of a jest),
Says the thing that he pleases as pleases him best.

TEMPORA MUTANTUR!

YES, here, once more a traveller,
I find the Angel Inn,
Where landlord, maids, and serving-men
Receive me with a grin:
Surely they can't remember Me,
My hair is grey and scanter;
I'm changed, so changed since I was here—
O tempora mutantur!

The Angel's not much altered since
That happy month of June,
Which brought me here with Pamela
To spend our honeymoon:
Ah me, I even recollect
The shape of this decanter!
We've since been both much put about!—
O tempora mutantur!

Ay, there's the clock, and looking-glass
Reflecting me again;

She vow'd her Love was very fair,
I see I'm very plain:
And there's that daub of Prince Leeboo;
'Twas Pamela's fond banter
To fancy it resembled *me*—
O tempora mutantur!

The curtains have been dyed, but there,
Unbroken, is the same,
The very same, crack'd pane of glass
On which I scratch'd her name.
Yes, there's her tiny flourish still;
It used to so enchant her
To link two happy names in one—
O tempora mutantur!

* * * *

The pilgrim sees an empty chair
Where Pamela once sat;
It may be she had found her grave,
It might be worse than that.
The fairest fade, the best of men
Have met with a supplanter;—
I wish that I could like this cry
Of tempora mutantur.

1856.

TO MY OLD FRIEND POSTUMUS

(J. G.)

And, like you clocke, when twelve shalle sound
To call our soules away,
Together may our hands be found,
An earnest that we praie.

My Friend, our few remaining years
Are hasting to an end,
They glide away, and lines are here
That time can never mend;
Thy blameless life avails thee not,—
Alas, my dear old Friend!

Death lifts a burthen from the poor,
And brings the weary rest;
Yon lad was gay, and now he mourns
The lass he loved the best;
But you and I, we still are here,
And still can share the jest!

O pleasant Earth! This peaceful home!
The darling at my knee!
My own dear wife! Thyself, old Friend!
And must it come to me,
That any face shall fill my place
Unknown to them and thee?

All vainly are we fenced about
From peril, day and night;
The awful rapids must be shot
Our shallop will be slight;
O, pray that then we may descry
A cheering beacon-light.

ON "A PORTRAIT OF A LADY"

BY THE PAINTER

She is good, for she must have a guileless mind
With that noble, trusting air;
A rose with a passionate heart is twined
In her crown of golden hair.
Some envy the cross that bewitchingly dips
To her bosom, and some have sighed
For the promise of May on her red, red lips,
And her thousand charms beside.

She is lovely and good; she has frank blue eyes;
A haunting shape. She stands
In a blossoming croft, under kindling skies,—
The weirdest of faery lands;
There are sapphire hills by the far-off seas,—
Grave laurels, and tender limes;

They tremble and glow in the morning
breeze,—
My Beauty is up betimes.

A bevy of idlers press around,
To wonder, and wish, and loll;
"Now who is the painter, and where has he
found
This Woman we all extol,
With her wistful mouth, and her candid
brow,
And a bloom as of bygone days?"—
How natural sounds their worship, how
Impertinent seems their praise!

I stand aloof; I can well afford
To pardon the babble and crush
As they praise a work (do I need reward?)
That has grown beneath my brush:
Aloof—and in fancy again I hear
The music rise and fall,
As they crown her Queen of their dance and
cheer,
She is mine, and Queen of All!

My thoughts are away to that happy day,
A few short months agone,
When we left the games, and the dance, to stray
Through the shadowy croft, alone.
My feet are again where the daisies shine,
Away from the noise and glare,
When I kiss'd her mouth, and her cheek press'd mine,
And I fasten'd that rose in her hair.

1868.

INCHBAE

The flow of life is yet a rill
That laughs, and leaps, and glistens;
And still the woodland rings, and still
The old Damœtas listens.

ANON he shuts a Poet's book
To heed the falling of the brook,
He cares but little why it flows,
Or whence it comes, or where it goes.

For here, on this bright heather bank,
His past—his future are a blank;
Enough for him the bloom, the cheer,
They all are his to-day, and here.

But hark! a voice that carols free,
And fills the strath with melody!
She comes! a Creature clad in grace,
And joyful promise in her face.

So let her fearlessly intrude
On this his much-loved solitude;

Is she a lovely phantom, or
That Love he long has waited for?

* * * *

O welcome as the morning dew;
Long, long have I expected you;
Come, share my seat, and, late or soon,
All else that's mine beneath the moon.

And sing your happy roundelay
While Nature listens. Till to-day
This giddy stream has never known
A cadence gladder than its own:

Forgive if I too fondly gaze,
Or praise the eyes that others praise:
I watch'd my Star, I've wander'd far—
Are you my Joy? You know you are!

Let others praise, as others prize,
The dearness of your frank blue eyes—
I cannot praise where I adore,
And that is praise--and something more.

AN OLD BUFFER

BUFFER.—A cushion or apparatus, with strong springs, to deaden the buff or concussion between a moving body and one on which it strikes.—*Webster's English Dictionary.*

"*If* Blossom's *a sceptic, or saucy, I'll search*
And I'll find her a wholesome corrective—in church!"
MAMMA *loquitur.*

"A KNOCK-ME-DOWN sermon, and worthy of Birch,"
Says I to my wife, as we toddle from church;
"Convincing indeed!" is the lady's remark;
"How logical, too, on the size of the Ark!"
Then *Blossom* cut in, without begging our pardons,
"Pa, was it as big as the 'Logical Gardens?"

"Miss *Blossom*," says I to my dearest of Dearies,
"Papa disapproves of nonsensical queries;
The Ark was an Ark, and had people to build it,

Enough that we're told Noah built it and
fill'd it:
Mamma doesn't ask how he caught his
opossums."
—Said mamma, "That remark is as foolish
as *Blossom's*!"

Thus talking and walking, the time is be-
guiled
By my orthodox Wife and my sceptical
Child;
I act as their *buffer*, whenever I can,
And you see I'm of use as a family man.
I parry their blows, and I've plenty to do—
I think that the Child's are the worst of the
two!

My Wife has a healthy aversion for sceptics,
She vows they are bad—why, they're only
dyspeptics!
May *Blossom* prove neither the one nor the
other,
But do as she's bid by her excellent mother.
She think's I'm a Solon; perhaps, if I huff
her,
She'll think I'm a . . . . something that's
denser and tougher.

MY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE!

Hark! Hark to my neighbour's flute!
Yon powder'd slave, that ox, that ass are his:
Hark to his wheezy pipe; my neighbour is
A worthy sort of brute.

My tuneful neighbour's rich—has houses, lands,
A wife (confound his flute)—a handsome wife!
Her love must give a gusto to his life.
See yonder—there she stands.

She turns, she gazes, she has lustrous eyes,
A throat like Juno, and Aurora's arms—
Per Bacco, what an affluence of charms!
My neighbour's drawn a prize.

Yet, with all these, he too may have his woes,
His dreary doubts, and that eternal preaching;

Suffers he still from early pious teaching
As I do? Goodness knows!

How vain the wealth that breeds its own vexation!
Yet few of us would care to quite forego it:
Then weariness of soul—and many know it—
Is not a glad sensation:

And, therefore, neighbour mine, without a sting
I contemplate thy fields, thy house, thy flocks,
I covet not thy man, thine ass, thine ox,
Thy flute, thy—anything.

BABY MINE

Baby mine, with the grave, grave face,
Where did you get that royal calm,
Too staid for joy, too still for grace?
I bend as I kiss your pink, soft palm;
Are you the first of a nobler race,
Baby mine?

You come from the region of *long ago*,
And gazing awhile where the seraphs dwell
Has given your face a glory and glow—
Of that brighter land have you aught to tell?
I seem to have known it—I more would know,
Baby mine.

Your rapt, blue eyes have a far-off reach,
Look at me now with those wondrous eyes,
Why are we doom'd to the gift of speech
While you are silent, and sweet, and wise?
You have much to learn—you have more to teach,
Baby mine.

WRITTEN UNDER AN ENGRAVING OF *MISS THOUGHTFUL*, WITH A LITTLE DOG IN HER ARMS, BY CARRINGTON BOWLES

Love me, love my Tray,
That is what these lips would say,
Did the lips but know the way.

Praise my curls or eyes, mayhap,
My scarf, or, if you will, my cap,
But take my darling on your lap!

Tray commands and Tray obeys,
Each of us the other sways—
Tray is mine, and I am Tray's.

WRITTEN UNDER AN ENGRAVING OF THE HONORABLE MRS. SHERARD, BY SMITH, AFTER KNELLER

She looks at me from arching brows,
This winsome, some one else's spouse;
This woman to be grave or gay with—
To call and see, to wish to stay with.
Such eyes are blue. Such cheeks are rosy!
Who gave, or who will get, her posy?
Ah, who can tell? but this I see—
She's framed and glazed to smile on *me*,
She never speaks, she will not sing,
She always does the wiser thing.

WRITTEN UNDER A MEZZOTINT ENGRAVING OF WHICH THE TITLE HAD BEEN CUT OFF

Dear *Gadabout*, your skirts reveal
A little, peeping, scarlet heel,
Your scarf would make a perfect sonnet,
I wonder who composed your bonnet?
Fond wife are you, or faithful maid?
Or meek-eyed nun in masquerade?

But while I gaze there comes a doubt,
Conjecture to conjecture linking,
Of what I wonder are you thinking?
And what's that book (Vol. I) about?
Are you Honoria—learned—witty?
Or only commonplace and *Kitty*?
Conjecture makes me critical,
Are you so perfect, after all?

Some booby, of a byegone day,
Has cut this Fair One's name away,
And so I've written down, d'ye see,
My nonsense, where it used to be.

A WORD THAT MAKES US LINGER

(*Written in the Visitors' Book at Gopsall*)

KIND hostess mine, who raised the latch
And welcomed me beneath your thatch,
Who make me here forget the pain,
And all the pleasures of Cockaigne,
Now, pen in hand, and pierced with woe,
I write one word before I go—
A word that dies upon my lips
While thus you kiss your finger-tips.

When Black-eyed Sue was rowed to land
That word she cried, and waved her hand—
Her lily hand!
It seems absurd,
But I *can't* write that dreadful word.

ON THE FIRST PAGE OF THE ROWFANT VISITOR'S BOOK

DEAR "What's-your-name," who lift the latch,
And make your stay beneath my thatch,
To no brief hour confine it,
But rest you here, and share our crust,
And when you go—if go you must—
Dear, what's your name? Pray sign it.

THE ROSE AND THE RING

(Christmas, 1854, and Christmas, 1863.)

She smiles, but her heart is in sable,
Ay, sad as her Christmas is chill;
She reads, and her book is the Fable
He penn'd for her while she was ill.
It is nine years ago since he wrought it,
Where reedy old Tiber is king;
And chapter by chapter he brought it,—
He read her *The Rose and the Ring*.

And when it was printed, and gaining
Renown with all lovers of glee,
He sent her this copy containing
His comical little *croquis*;
A sketch of a rather droll couple,
She's pretty, he's quite t'other thing!
He begs (with a spine vastly supple)
She will study *The Rose and the Ring*.

It pleased the kind Wizard to send her
The last and the best of his Toys;
He aye had a sentiment tender
For innocent maidens and boys:
And though he was great as a scorner,
The guileless were safe from his sting:
How sad is past mirth to the mourner—
A tear on *The Rose and the Ring.*

She reads; I may vainly endeavour
Her mirth-chequer'd grief to pursue;
For she knows she has lost, and for ever,
The Heart that was bared to so few;
But here, on the shrine of his glory,
One poor little blossom I fling;—
And You see there's a nice little story
Attach'd to *The Rose and the Ring.*

1864.

MR. PLACID'S FLIRTATION

Jemima was cross, and I lost my umbrella
That day at the tomb of Cecilia Metella.
LETTERS FROM ROME.

MISS TRISTRAM'S *poulet* ended thus: "Nota bene,
We meet for croquet in the Aldobrandini."
Says my wife, "Then I'll drive, and you'll ride with Selina"
(Jones's fair spouse, of the Via Sistina).

We started: I'll own that my family deem
I'm an ass, but I'm not such an ass as I seem;
As we cross'd the stones gently a nursemaid said "La—
There goes Mrs. Jones with Miss Placid's papa!"

Our friends, one or two may be mention'd anon,
Had arranged *rendezvous* at the Gate of St. John:

That pass'd, off we spun over turf that's not
green there,
And soon were all met at the villa. You've
been there?

I'll try and describe, or I won't, if you please,
The cheer that was set for us under the
trees:
You have read the *menu*, may you read it
again;
Champagne, perigord, galantine, and —
champagne.

The luncheon despatch'd, we adjourn'd to
croquet,
A dainty, but difficult sport in its way.
Thus I counsel the sage, who to play at it
stoops,
*Belabour thy neighbour, and spoon through
thy hoops.*

Then we stroll'd, and discourse found its
kindest of tones:
"How charming were solitude and — Mrs.
Jones!"
"Indeed, Mr. Placid, I dote on the sheeny
And shadowy paths of this Aldobrandini!"

A girl came with violet posies, and two
Soft eyes, like her violets, freshen'd with dew,
And a kind of an indolent, fine-lady air,—
As if she by accident found herself there.

I bought one. Selina was pleased to accept it;
She gave me a rosebud to keep—and I've kept it.
Then twilight was near, and I think, in my heart,
When she vow'd she must go, she was loth to depart.

Cattivo momento! we dare not delay:
The steeds are remounted, and wheels roll away:
The ladies *condemn* Mrs. Jones, as the phrase is,
But vie with each other in chanting my praises.

"He has so much to say!" cries the fair Mrs. Legge;
"How amusing he was about missing the peg!"

"What a beautiful smile!" says the plainest
Miss Gunn.
All echo, "He's charming! delightful!—
What fun!"

This sounds rather *nice*, and it's perfectly
clear it
Had sounded more *nice* had I happen'd to
hear it;
The men were less civil, and gave me a rub,
So I afterwards heard when I went to the
Club.

Says Brown, "I shall drop Mr. Placid's
society;"
(Brown is a prig of improper propriety;)
"Hang him," said Smith (who from cant's
not exempt)
"Why he'll bring immorality into contempt."

Says I (to myself) when I found me alone,
"My wife has my heart, is it always her
own?"
And further, says I (to myself) "I'll be shot
If I know if Selina adores me or not."

Says Jones, "I've just come from the *scarvi*,
at Veii,
And I've bought some remarkably fine
scarabæi!"

OUR PHOTOGRAPHS

She play'd me false, but that's not why
I haven't quite forgiven Di,
Although I've tried:
This curl was hers, so brown, so bright,
She gave it me one blissful night,
And—more beside!

In *photo* we were group'd together;
She wore the darling hat and feather
That I adore;
In profile by her side I sat
Reading my poetry—but that
She'd heard before.

Why, after all, Di threw me over
I never knew, and can't discover,
Or even guess;
May be Smith's lyrics she decided
Were sweeter than the sweetest I did—
I acquiesce.

A week before their wedding day,
When Smith was call'd in haste away
To join *the Staff*,
Di gave to him, with tearful mien,
Our *only photograph*. I've seen
That photograph.

I've seen it in Smith's album-book!
Just think! her hat—her tender look,
Are now that brute's!
Before she gave it, off she cut
My body, head, and lyrics, but
She was obliged, the little slut,
To leave my Boots.

ADVICE TO A POET

Dear Poet, do not rhyme at all!
But if you must, don't tell your neighbours,
Or five in six, who cannot scrawl,
Will dub you "donkey" for your labours.
This epithet may seem unjust
To you, or any Verse-begetter:—
Must we admit, I fear we must,
That nine in ten deserve no better?

Then let them bray with leathern lungs,
And match you with the beast that grazes;
Or wag their heads and hold their tongues,
Or damn you with the faintest praises.
Be patient, for be sure you won't
Win vogue without extreme vexation:
And hope for sympathy,—but don't
Expect it from a near relation.

When strangers first approved my books,
My kindred marvell'd what the praise meant;
They now wear more respectful looks,
But can't get over their amazement.
Indeed, they've power to wound beyond
That wielded by the fiercest hater,
For all the time they are so fond—
Which makes the aggravation greater.

* * * *

Most warblers only half express
The threadbare thoughts they feebly utter:
Now if they tried for something less,
They might not sink, and gasp, and flutter.
Fly low at first,—then mount and win
The niche for which the town's contesting;
And never mind your kith and kin,—
But never give them cause for jesting.

Hold Pegasus in hand, control
A taste for ornament ensnaring:
Simplicity is yet the soul
Of all that Time deems worth the sparing.

Long lays are not a lively sport,
So clip your own to half a quarter;
If readers now don't think them short,
Posterity will cut them shorter.

* * * *

I look on bards who whine for praise
With feelings of profoundest pity:
They hunger for the Poet's bays,
And swear one's waspish when one's witty.
The Critic's lot is passing hard,—
Between ourselves, I think reviewers,
When call'd to truss a crowing bard,
Should not be sparing of the skewers.

* * * *

We all, the foolish and the wise,
Regard our verse with fascination,
Through asinine-paternal eyes,
And hues of Fancy's own creation;
Prythee, then, check that passing sneer
At any self-deluded rhymer
Who thinks his beer (the smallest beer!)
Has all the gust of *alt Hochheimer*.

* * * *

Oh, for the Poet-Voice that swells
To lofty truths, or noble curses—
I only wear the cap and bells,
And yet some Tears are in my verses.
I softly trill my sparrow reed,
Pleased if but One should like the twitter;
Humbly I lay it down to heed
A music or a minstrel fitter.

THE JESTER'S MORAL

Is Human Life a pleasant game
  That gives the palm to all?
A fight for fortune, or for fame,
  A struggle, and a fall?
Who views the Past, and all he prized,
  With tranquil exultation?
And who can say—*I've realised*
  My fondest aspiration?

Alack, not one. No, rest assured
  That all are prone to quarrel
With Fate, when worms destroy their gourd,
  Or mildew spoils their laurel:
The prize may come to cheer our lot,
  But all too late; and granted
If even better, still it's not
  Exactly what we wanted.

My schoolboy time! I wish to praise
  That bud of brief existence;
The vision of my younger days
  Now trembles in the distance.

An envious vapour lingers here,
And there I find a chasm;
But much remains, distinct and clear,
To sink enthusiasm.

Such thoughts just now disturb my soul
With reason good, for lately
I took the train to Marley-knoll,
And cross'd the fields to Mately.
I found old Wheeler at his gate,
Who once rare sport could show me,
My Mentor wise on springe and bait—
But Wheeler did not know me.

"Good lord!" at last exclaimed the churl,
"Are you the little chap, sir,
What used to train his hair in curl,
And wore a scarlet cap, sir?"
And then he took to fill in blanks,
And conjure up old faces;
And talk of well-remember'd pranks
In half-forgotten places.

It pleased the man to tell his brief
And rather mournful story,—
Old Bliss's school had come to grief,
And Bliss had "gone to glory."

Fell'd were his trees, his house was razed,
And what less keenly pain'd me,
A venerable Donkey grazed
Exactly where he caned me.

And where have school and playmate sped,
Whose ranks were once so serried?
Why some are wed, and some are dead,
And some are only buried;
Frank Petre, erst so full of fun,
Is now *St. Blaise's* Prior,
And Travers, the attorney's son,
Is Member for the shire.

Dull maskers we. Life's festival
Enchants the blithe new-comer;
But seasons change;—then where are all
Those friendships of our summer?
Wan pilgrims flit athwart our track,
Cold looks attend the meeting;
We only greet them, glancing back,
Or pass without a greeting.

Old Bliss I owe some rubs, but pride
Constrains me to postpone 'em,—
Something he taught me, ere he died,
About *nil nisi bonum.*

I've met with wiser, better men,
But I forgive him wholly;
Perhaps his jokes were sad, but then
He used to storm so drolly.

"*I still can laugh*" is still my boast,
But mirth has sounded gayer;
And which provokes my laughter most,
The preacher or the player?
Alack, I cannot laugh at what
Once made us laugh so freely;
For Nestroy and Grassot are not;
And where is Mr. Keeley?

I'll join *St. Blaise* (a verseman fit,
More fit than I, once did it)
—*I* shave my crown? No, Common-Wit,
And Common-Sense forbid it.
I'd sooner dress your Little Miss
As Paulet shaves his poodles!
As soon propose for Betsy Bliss,
Or get proposed for *Boodle's*.

We prate of Life's illusive dyes,
And yet fond Hope misleads us;
We all believe we near the prize,
Till some fresh dupe succeeds us!

And yet, though Life's a riddle, though
No Clerk has yet explain'd it,
I still can hope; for well I know
That Love has thus ordain'd it.

PARIS, *November*, 1864.

NOTES

(N. B.—*The notes, or portions of notes, enclosed in square brackets are supplementary.*)

LONDON LYRICS. Title-page.

[Between the first appearance of this book in 1857, and its latest appearance in 1893—two years before the author's death—there have been numerous editions of it. For the sake of convenience, these may be arranged in three classes, viz :—

I. ENGLISH EDITIONS.
II. AMERICAN EDITIONS.
III. PRIVATELY-PRINTED ISSUES.

I. ENGLISH EDITIONS.—The earliest of these—the *editio princeps*—was published in 1857 by Chapman and Hall, then of Piccadilly. It is a square post 8vo of viii-90 pages, containing twenty-six poems ; and its frontispiece is an etching by George Cruikshank, which illustrates the first of these, and is entitled "Building Castles in the Air." The price was 3/6d. The prefatory notice is dated "May, 1857" ; and the volume is dedicated to the memory of the writer's sister, Miss Bertha Locker, who had died at Paris in 1853. A second edition in foolscap 8vo, and published by Basil Montagu Pickering, 196 Piccadilly, followed in 1862, at 4/6d. This was

inscribed to "C. C. L."—the writer's wife, Lady Charlotte Locker,—in a dixain dated "Rome, May, 1862." A third edition (sq. post 8vo), described as *A Selection from the Works of Frederick Locker*, was included in 1865 in "Moxon's Miniature Poets." It contained nineteen woodcuts after designs by Richard Doyle; and a portrait of the author by J. E. Millais, R.A., etched from a photograph. This selection was issued again by Moxon in 1868. Subsequent editions or impressions appeared in 1870, 1872, and 1873 (Strahan); 1874 (Isbister); 1876 (King and Co.), said to be "enlarged and finally revised"; 1878, 1881, 1885 ("Elzevir Series," of which there were 50 l. p. copies), 1891 and 1893 (Kegan Paul and Co.)—the last, or 1893 edition, from which the present volume is reprinted, being described in a publishers' notification at the back of the bastard title as the "Twelfth Edition *published* in England." It contains sixty-four pieces in all as compared with the twenty-six of 1857.

II. American Editions.—The first American edition was issued at Boston by Field, Osgood and Co. in foolscap 8vo, and is dated 1870. In 1883 another edition appeared at New York over the imprint of White, Stokes and Allen;[1] and in 1884 the same firm put forth a third edition, described as "authorised," and printed from the stereo plates of the English edition of 1881, which the author himself supplied. This contained his Kate Greenaway book plate as a vignette; and a full length portrait, from a pen-and-ink sketch by George Du Maurier

[1] In a copy of this American issue at the British Museum (C. 44, b. 4), Mr. Locker, in November, 1883, "to make it less unworthy," has inserted, in the blank leaves at the end, autographs of Keats and Tennyson.

(dated March, 1872), figured as its frontispiece. There was also a large paper issue having, for portrait, only a copy of the head and shoulders of the Du Maurier sketch; and, for vignette, the Marks book plate. Then there is the long f'cap 8vo edition printed in 1883 (104 copies) for the New York "Book Fellow's Club," which, besides special designs, contains three illustrations by Randolph Caldecott and Kate Greenaway; and, lastly, the selection prepared by the author himself in 1895 for the members of the Rowfant Club of Cleveland, Ohio,—a club which had borrowed its name, by permission, from Mr. Locker's Sussex home. This volume, the impression of which was limited to 127 copies on Japanese vellum, is entitled *Rowfant Rhymes*, and it includes a dedication, dated "4 September, 1886," by Robert Louis Stevenson, an introduction by the present annotator, a head of the author (enlarged) from the Du Maurier sketch, and three vignettes specially etched for its pages by Edmund H. Garrett. In 1884 one of the privately-printed volumes hereafter mentioned, that called *London Rhymes*, was also reprinted in America; and we have seen a self-styled "authorised edition" dated 1889, which bears the imprint of Frederick A. Stokes and Brother, New York.

III. Privately-Printed Issues—The earliest privately-printed impression was put forth in 1868, in foolscap 8vo, by John Wilson of 93 Great Russell Street, with the title of *Poems by Frederick Locker*, and a frontispiece etched by George Cruikshank as an illustration to "My Mistress's Boots," which came first in the volume. On the title-page are the words "[*Not Published*]." About half the copies of this

issue, numbering one hundred in all, were without the Cruikshank etching, and were called *London Lyrics*. Of the remainder twenty were on large paper, cr. 4to, and in six of these the frontispiece was tinted by the author's daughter, Mrs. Augustine Birrell.[1] A second private issue followed in 1872; a third (paper covers, grey sides, white face and label) which corresponded with the Isbister edition of 1874, and bore that date, contained proof impressions of the Doyle woodcuts. It was limited to eighty copies, and was prepared for presentation to the Cosmopolitan Club, of which Locker was a member. Two or three copies of this were printed on larger paper. The Doyle illustrations were also inserted in a fourth paper-bound issue of 1876. In 1881 came a selection to which was prefixed the sextain printed at p. v. of the present volume; and of this there were fifty copies on large paper, which contained an India proof frontispiece by Randolph Caldecott (sometimes found in two states) illustrating "Bramble-Rise," and another by Kate Greenaway, illustrating "Little Dinky." This selection was intended to be eclectic; but though the writer declared it "as good as possible, as regarded the general reader," in the succeeding year, 1882, he printed all the pieces which it did *not* include in a volume called *London Rhymes*, as being efforts concerning which he "felt a fatherly concern." The issues of 1881 and 1882 consequently comprise the bulk of his work in verse.]

"Apollo made, one April Day." Page v.

[This sextain, as the date intimates, was specially

[1] One of these coloured large paper copies was presented to the Athenæum Club in June, 1869, by the author; another belonged to the late Colonel Francis Grant.

written for the privately-printed selection of 1881. Mr. Locker prefixed it in the edition of 1893, and it is of necessity reproduced here.]

"The Unrealized Ideal." Page 1.

[First printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for December, 1873, as "My Only Love," and afterwards published in the edition of 1874, p. 187.]

"To My Grandmother." Page 2.

[First published in the edition of 1862, p. 86. Whether the "picture by Mr. Romney," which purports to have suggested these verses, is duly chronicled in Mr. Humphry Ward's monumental Catalogue of that painter's works, we cannot pretend to say; but, judging from the frequent appearance of the poem in different anthologies, it must be one of the author's most popular efforts. It is therefore worth noting that, apparently, it was never printed in a magazine. "I could get no one to accept 'My Grandmother,'" writes the author in a letter quoted in *Once a Week* for September 7, 1872. "What used particularly to discourage me was,"—he adds characteristically,—"having my verses returned as not suitable, and then to see in the very next number of the magazine a poem that gave me the impression that it was the work of some relative of the editor—perhaps his grandmamma." The stanza of "My Grandmother" is that of Holmes's "Last Leaf"—a poem which Locker greatly admired. Holmes, in his turn, had taken the stanza from Longfellow.]

"A Human Skull." Page 6.

"In our last month's Magazine you may remember there were some verses about a portion of a skeleton. Did you remark how the poet and present proprietor of the human skull at once settled the sex of it, and determined off-hand that it must have belonged to a woman? Such skulls are locked up in many gentlemen's hearts and memories. Bluebeard, you know, had a whole museum of them—as that imprudent little wife of his found out to her cost. And, on the other hand, a lady, we suppose, would select hers of the sort which had carried beards in the flesh."—(*Adventures of Philip on his Way through the World*, *Cornhill Magazine*, January, 1861, p. 18). (*Note by F. L. L.*)

["A Human Skull" was Locker's first contribution to the *Cornhill Magazine*, for which, according to *My Confidences*, 1896, Thackeray invited him to write (p. 153); and he speaks of the pleasure he experienced at receiving a proof of the poem, which was brought to him by the Editor's daughters (p. 175). It appeared in the number for December, 1860 (vol. ii. 718), and bears his initials. "Thackeray," he wrote in the letter already cited at p. 169, "believed in me, and used to say, 'Never mind, Locker—our verse *may* be small beer, but at any rate it is the right tap'"; and this is repeated in his posthumous Memoirs. The *Cornhill* version of "A Human Skull" is longer than, and differs considerably from, the one given here. Thackeray, it seems,—like Anthony Trollope and Charles Dickens,—was no perfunctory editor. "When I first sent these lines to the *Cornhill Magazine*," says a note in the *London Lyrics* of 1874, p. 195 (since omitted), "Mr

Thackeray, the editor, and an admirable judge of verse, proposed an alteration in the third stanza, and he returned it to me as it now stands. Originally I had made it to run thus :—

" Did she live yesterday, or ages sped?
What colour were the eyes when bright and waking?
And were your ringlets fair? Poor little head!
—Poor little heart! that long has done with aching.'

"A Human Skull" was first reprinted in the edition of 1862, p. 22.]

"My Neighbour Rose." Page 9.

[This poem appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* for September, 1861, pp. 319-20, and was published in the edition of 1862, p. 69.]

"The Widow's Mite." Page 13.

[This is printed at p. 72 of the first edition of 1857, where it has for epigraph—St. Mark's Gospel, chap. xii, verses 42, 43, 44."]

"St. James's Street." Page 14.

I hope my readers, whoever they may be, will not credit me with all the sentiments expressed in this volume. I am told that these lines have disturbed some Americans, but surely without cause. The remark in the seventh stanza is natural in the mouth of a rather exclusive habitué of St. James's, who has the mortification to feel that he is no longer young, who is too shallow-minded to appreciate our advance in civilisation during the last forty years, but who is nevertheless sufficiently keen to see what is possible

in the future. My friends know I have a sincere admiration for the American people.—(*Note by F. L. L.*)

["St. James's Street" was first published in the edition of 1870, p. 167, with the sub-title "A Grumble." To write a lengthy antiquarian note upon this piece would not be difficult; but it is needless. Waller's house, in which he lived from 1660 to 1687, was on the west side of St. James's Street, as was also later Crockford's noted gambling club. White's (Nos. 37 and 38), and Boodle's (No. 28), belong to the east side. Byron lodged at No. 8 intermittently between 1808-1814; Gibbon died in 1794 at No. 76, the house of Elmsley the publisher. Gillray's caricatures were sold at Miss Humphrey's shop, No. 29, over which the artist lodged. "Lepel" (Lady Hervey) lived in St. James's Place; Nell Gwynne, in Pall Mall, hard by. The Churchill of stanza 2 is no doubt the satirist, who was educated at Westminster.]

"Beggars." Page 17.

[First published in the Moxon volume of 1865, p. 157. It has since been considerably revised. The motto—one of the best known of the writer's utterances—is from a discarded piece entitled "The Jester's Plea," first published in 1862 in a volume of Poems by several hands, entitled *An Offering to Lancashire*, and then reprinted at p. 67 in the Moxon volume of 1865.]

"Bramble-rise." Page 21.

[The first version of this is to be found at p. 55 of the first edition of 1857.]

"A Garden Lyric." Page 25.

When the verses at p. 25 first appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* [under the title of "Geraldine and I"] many of my readers could not see the point, and others, seeing it, disliked it so heartily, that I altered them as given here [below]. Now I am sorry to say I think neither one nor other very good, but that "Geraldine and I" is the best.

A Garden Lyric

The flow of life is yet a rill
That laughs, and leaps, and glistens;
And still the woodland rings, and still
The old Damœtas listens.

We have loiter'd and laugh'd in the flowery croft,
We have met under wintry skies;
Her voice is the dearest voice, and soft
Is the light in her gentle eyes;
It is bliss in the silent woods, among
Gay crowds, or in any place
To hear her voice, to gaze on her young
Confiding face.

For ever may roses divinely blow,
And wine-dark pansies charm
By the prim box path where I felt the glow
Of her dimpled, trusting arm,
And the sweep of her silk as she turn'd and smil'd
A smile as pure as her pearls;
The breeze was in love with the darling Child,
As it moved her curls.

She showed me her ferns and woodbine sprays,
Foxglove and jasmine stars,
A mist of blue in the beds, a blaze
Of red in the celadon jars;

And velvety bees in convolvulus bells,
  And roses of bountiful June—
Oh! who would think their summer spells
  Could die so soon!

For a glad song came from the milking shed,
  On a wind of the summer south,
And the green was golden above her head,
  And a sunbeam kiss'd her mouth;
Sweet were the lips where that sunbeam dwelt;
  And the wings of Time were fleet
As I gazed; and neither spoke, for we felt
  Life was so sweet!

And the odorous limes were dim above
  As we leant on a drooping bough;
And the darkling air was a breath of love,
  And a witching thrush sang "Now!"
For the sun dropt low, and the twilight grew
  As we listen'd, and sigh'd, and leant;
That day was the sweetest day—and we knew
  What the sweetness meant.

1868. (*Note by F. L. L.*)

[In the 1893 edition of *London Lyrics* from which this volume is printed, the author reproduced the first four stanzas of "Geraldine and I," and ended with the concluding stanza given above. But he must have altered his mind afterwards, for, in the corrected copy of the 1893 volume left behind him at his death, he had cancelled this stanza, and substituted the old last stanza of "Geraldine and I," so that the poem, as finally revised, practically corresponds with the version which originally appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* for April 1868.]

"GERTRUDE'S NECKLACE." Page 28.

[First published in the volume of 1872, p. 183, as "Gerty's Necklace."]

"Gertrude's Glove." Page 30.

[First published in the volume of 1872, p. 185, as "Gerty's Glove."]

"The Old Oak-Tree at Hatfield Broad-oak." Page 31.

[First published in the edition of 1862, p. 79. Hallingbury, in Essex, whence this poem is dated, is but a short distance from Hatfield Regis or Hatfield Broadoak; and this again is but three miles from the Down Hall (or rather the site of the Down Hall) which Lord Harley gave to Locker's predecessor, Prior. The old oak of the verses is now (1904) in ruins and quite dead. It has been surrounded with a railing, and a young tree planted by its side.[1] The "Squire" of the fifteenth stanza was Mr. John Archer Houblon —the "godpapa" (as he is styled in the stanza that immediately follows) of Mrs. Augustine Birrell. Mr. Houblon died in October, 1891. In the church at Hallingbury is a window to the memory of Mrs. Birrell's mother, Lady Charlotte Locker (*My Confidences*, 1896, p. 201); and on a monument in Dunfermline Abbey, it may be added, is the following epitaph by her husband, afterwards included in *Rowfant Rhymes*, p. 134:—

> "Her worth, her wit, her loving smile,
> Were with me but a little while;
> She came, she went; yet though that voice
> Is hush'd that made the heart rejoice,
> And though the grave is dark and chill,
> Her memory is fragrant still,—
> She stands on the Eternal Hill.

[1] We owe these particulars to the courtesy of the incumbent of Hatfield Broadoak, the Rev. Francis W. Galpin.

Here pause, kind soul, whoe'er you be,
And weep for her, and pray for me."

"A Terrible Infant." Page 36.

[First published in the volume of 1872, p. 175.]

"At Hurlingham." Page 37.

[This was first printed in shorter form, and with the title "Her Opinion of Hurlingham," in *London Society* for August, 1871. It had been previously offered to the *Cornhill;* but Sir (then Mr.) Leslie Stephen thought the condemnation of "pigeoncide" should be more pronounced. The poet, however, regarded it as sufficiently implied. "At Hurlingham" was afterwards included in the volume of 1872, p. 178.]

"The Pilgrims of Pall Mall." Page 40.

[This appeared at p. 33 of the first edition of 1857. In the volume entitled *London Rhymes*, 1882, p. 57, is printed a sequel called "Many Years After," which had previously been included at p. 190 of *Patchwork*, 1879, when it was written. This was not reprinted in the final volume of 1893. As, however, it appears at p. 125 of the posthumous volume of *Rowfant Rhymes*, 1895, which Locker himself selected, it may properly be reproduced here in its final form:—

"Many Years After."

(Another poet speaks)

I saw some books exposed for sale—
Some dear, and some—stage play and tale—
As dear as any:

A few, perhaps more orthodox
Or torn, were tumbled in a box—
"All these a penny."

I open'd one at hazard, but
Its leaves, tho' soil'd, were still uncut;
And yet before
I'd read a page, I felt indeed
A wish to cut that leaf, and read
Some pages more.

A poet sang of what befell
When, years gone by, he'd paced Pall Mall:
While walking thus—
A boy—he'd met a maiden. Then
Fair women all were brave, and men
Were virtuous!

They oft had met, he wonder'd why;
He praised her sprightly air, and I
Believe he meant it:
They never spoke, but if he smiled
Her eyes had seem'd to say (poor child!)
"I don't resent it."

And then this poet mused and grieved,
In kindly strain, his verse relieved
By kindlier jest:
Then he with sad, prophetic glance,
Bethought him she, ere then, perchance,
Had found her rest.

Then I was minded how my joy
Sometimes had told me of a boy
With curly head—
"You know," she'd laugh—(she then was well!)
"I used to meet him in Pall Mall—
Ere you me wed."

And then, for fun, she'd vow, "Good lack,
I'll go there now and fetch thee back
At least a curl!"

She once was here, now she is gone!—
And so, you see, my wife was yon
Bright little girl!

I am not one for shedding tears;
That boy's now dead, or bow'd with years;
But see—sometimes
He'd thought of her!—that made me weep;
That's why I bought—and why I keep
His book of rhymes.

1868.]

"An Old Muff." Page 43.

[First printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for April, 1864, after Thackeray's death, and then included in the Moxon Selection of 1865, p. 11. The motto is a quatrain varied from a discarded version of the first four lines of stanza 6 of the poem in this collection called "Reply to a Letter enclosing a Lock of Hair," p. 83.]

"Geraldine." Page 47.

[First published in the Moxon selection of 1865, p. 53. Stothard, Blake, and Lamb (stanza 8) were all special favourites with the writer himself. He had a large collection of Stothard's book-illustrations; and some of the rarest works of Blake and Lamb figure in the Catalogue of the Rowfant Library.

The last word of stanza seven shows that the writer did not at this date feel the objection which later stirred the mirth of his friend Calverley:—

And nevermore must printer do
As men did longago; but run
"For" into "ever," bidding two
Be one.

Fly Leaves, 1872, 86.]

"At her Window." Page 50.

[This was first printed in *Good Words* for 1873, p. 91. The motto is varied from the last stanza of a discarded poem in the edition of 1862 (p. 10) entitled "Sorrento," and dated March in that year.]

"Rotten Row." Page 52.

[First printed in *Macmillan's Magazine* for November, 1867, and then included in the edition of 1870, p. 170.

The jetty, and latterly, grizzled curls (stanza 6) of George John Frederick, Viscount Cantelupe (1814-1850), the eldest son of the fifth Earl De La Warr, were long familiar to riders in the Row. He was a notable dandy and lady-killer. "Lord Cantelupe [is] the Apollo of the place [Rome]; four ladies [are] so in love that he cannot tear himself away" (*Letters of Harriet Countess Granville*, 1894, vol. ii. p. 348, under date of January, 1843). The late Lord Lamington had intended to give some account of this bygone notability in the sketches upon which he was engaged at his death, a portion of which were issued in 1890 with the title *In the Days of the Dandies*.

"A Kind Providence." Page 55.

[First published in the volume of 1862, p. 77, as Part ii. of "Susannah."]

"Loulou and her Cat." Page 56.

[First published in the volume of 1862, p. 51, as "The Angora Cat." In the first version "M'sieu Pons" is named Dupont, and "Lou" is Zouzou.]

"The Skeleton in the Cupboard." Page 58.

[This was first published in the Moxon Selection of 1865, p. 98.]

"An Invitation to Rome, and the Reply." Page 61.

[This first appeared in the Moxon Selection of 1865, p. 31, and appended as a note was the following from Thackeray's *English Humourists of the Eighteenth Century* (1858, p. 47):—

"He never sends away a letter to her but he begins a new one on the same day. He can't bear to let go her kind little hand, as it were. He knows that she is thinking of him, and longing for him far away in Dublin yonder." The persons referred to are Swift and Stella.]

"To my Mistress." Page 70.

These lines by Corneille were addressed to Mademoiselle du Parc the actress. She was beloved by Corneille, Molière, and Racine, and she preferred the last. Her personal distinction gained her the title of *Marquise*. The last four stanzas are brimful of spirit, and the mixture of pride and vanity they display is remarkable.

"Marquise, si mon visage
A quelques traits un peu vieux,
Souvenez-vous qu'à mon âge
Vous ne vaudrez guère mieux.

"Le temps aux plus belles choses
Se plaît à faire un affront,
Et saura faner vos roses
Comme il a ridé mon front.

" Le même cours des planètes
Règle nos jours et nos nuits :
On m'a vu ce que vous êtes ;
Vous serez ce que je suis.

" Cependant j'ai quelques charmes
Qui sont assez éclatants
Pour n'avoir pas trop d'alarmes
De ces ravages du temps.

" Vous en avez qu'on adore,
Mais ceux que vous méprisez
Pourroient bien durer encore
Quand ceux-là seront usés.

" Ils pourront sauver la gloire
Des yeux qui me semblent doux,
Et dans mille ans faire croire
Ce qu'il me plaira de vous.

" Chez cette race nouvelle
Où j'aurai quelque crédit,
Vous ne passerez pour belle
Qu'autant que je l'aurai dit.

" Pensez-y, belle Marquise :
Quoiqu'un grison fasse effroi,
Il vaut bien qu'on le courtise
Quand il est fait comme moi." [1]

(*Note by F. L. L.*)

[This translation was published in Moxon's Selection of 1865, p. 73. When it first appeared, it was accompanied by a note from the *Saturday Review* of 23rd July, 1864, in which the original was quoted at length from M. Emile Deschanel, who said of it :

[1] This has here been slightly corrected from the *Œuvres de P. Corneille* (*Grands Écrivains*), 1862, x. pp. 165-6.

"*Le sujet est léger, le rhythme court, mais on y retrouve la fierté de l'homme, et aussi l'ampleur du tragique.*" To the edition of 1872 (p. 196) Locker added this comment: "Corneille's lines are excellent, but I venture to think that if he had compressed the idea into five or six stanzas they would have had more force."

According to Jal's *Dictionnaire Critique de Biographie et d'Histoire*, 1872, p. 936, Marquise-Thérèse de Gorle, otherwise Mlle. du Parc, and the "Andromaque" of Racine, died 11th December, 1668, "aged about twenty-five years [35?]." She was then the widow of René Berthelot, sieur du Parc (Molière's "Gros-René" in the *Dépit Amoureux*), d. 1664. Why "Marquise" forms part of her Christian name is not explained, but contemporaries speak of "*son port de Reyne*."

The couplet which precedes the translation is from stanza 4 of a discarded poem called "The Enchanted Rose," at p. 43 of the first edition of 1857.]

"CIRCUMSTANCE." Page 72.

[First published in the first edition of 1857, p. 46. To the reprint in the edition of 1874 the author prefixed the following octave for epigraph:—

"At Brighton, just a year ago,
As I was leaving *maison* MUTTON,
My scarf got caught, it vex'd me so,
On that tall Captain Rose's button!
I thought he'd think me too inane
And awkward that September sunny,
And now September's come again!
And now we're married!—ain't it funny?"
(*Extract from Mrs Rose's Diary.*)

This had been published as a separate poem at p. 174 in the edition of 1872, where it was stated to have been "suggested by a woodcut by Mr John Leech."]

"YORICK'S FUNERAL." Page 73.

[First published with this title in the volume of 1881, p. 73. The verses formed the last two of a discarded poem entitled "Implora Pace (One Hundred years hence)" in the Moxon Selection of 1865, p. 123.]

"CUPID ON THE CROSSING." Page 74.

[First published (in part) in 1874, p. 23, as an epigraph to "The Pilgrims of Pall Mall."]

"PICCADILLY." Page 75.

[First published in the first edition of 1857, p. 17, with this motto from Lamb's "The Londoner" (*Morning Post*, February 1, 1802):—"Often, when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into her [London's] crowded Strand, and fed my humour, till tears have wetted my cheek for unutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture. . . . . Nursed amid her noise, her crowds, her beloved smoke, what have I been doing all my life, if I have not lent out my heart with usury to such scenes?" (Lucas's *Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, 1903, i. pp. 401, 402.)

The writer was certainly born too late to have ever seen in the flesh the notorious "Old Q." of stanza 6, William Douglas, third Earl of March, and fourth Duke of Queensberry. But it was hardly

"long ages ago"; and there must have been many living in 1857 who—like Leigh Hunt—could clearly recall the wizened, hook-nosed figure with the star, and parasol, and chip-hat lined with green, which generally occupied the balcony by the bow window in what is now 138 Piccadilly, and took stock of the passers-by (the women especially) through a vigilant quizzing-glass. "Old Q." died in December 1810. "Old P." was, of course, Lord Palmerston, who died in 1865.]

"A *Nice* Correspondent." Page 78.

Ere long, perhaps in the next generation, the word NICE, and some other equally common words, may have passed into the limbo of *elegant*, *genteel*, etc. Fashions change, and certain words sink in the scale of gentility, and pass, like houses, into the hands of humbler proprietors. But what can poor poets do! (*Note by F. L. L.*)

[The above note appeared in the edition of 1874. The word "nice" must even then have had a prosperous career, for in Miss Austen's *Northanger Abbey* of 1818, Henry Tilney is already censuring its use by Catherine Morland. "Oh, it is a very nice word, indeed!—it does for everything. Originally, perhaps, it was applied only to express neatness, propriety, delicacy, or refinement: people were nice in their dress, in their sentiments, or their choice. But now [*circa* 1800] every condemnation on every subject is comprised in this one word" (Chap. XIV.). (See also for use of "nice" "Geraldine," "Mr. Placid's Flirtation" and "Rotten Row.")

"A Nice Correspondent" was first printed in *St. Paul's Magazine* for June, 1868, and afterwards

included in the volume of 1870, p. 173. "When *Fraser* declined 'A *Nice* Correspondent,' I sent it to St. Paul's," says the writer in the letter quoted in *Once a Week*, 7th September, 1872. The motto, like that "To My Mistress," comes from a later version of the rejected "Enchanted Rose" in the edition of 1857. It forms the first stanza of that poem as it appears in the edition of 1865 under the title (which the piece also bears in 1862) of "The Fairy Rose."

The *Janet's Repentance* of stanza 3 is one of George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 1858.]

"My Song." Page 81.

[First printed in the *Spectator* for 19th February, 1876, and afterwards in the edition of 1876, p. 82.]

"Reply to a Letter enclosing a Lock of Hair." Page 83.

[First published in the edition of 1862, p. 54. See note to "An Old Muff." The motto is from a discarded poem entitled "Remember and Forgive," which appeared in the edition of 1872.]

"From the Cradle." Page 87.

[First published in *London Rhymes* of 1882, p. 63.]

"A Rhyme of One." Page 88.

[First printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for May, 1876; afterwards at p. 181 of the edition of 1876; then in *Patchwork*, 1879, p. 29. Mr. Godfrey Tennyson Locker Lampson, who is the subject, was born in 1875.]

"THE TWINS." Page 90.

[First printed at p. 64 of *London Rhymes*, 1882. The twins were Oliver and Maud Locker Lampson, the poet's youngest children.

"Limner Kate" was Miss Kate Greenaway, d. 1901, who made a delightful sketch of Mr. Locker's family by his second wife to accompany the dedication to them collectively of *Little Anne and other Poems*, by Jane and Ann Taylor, which Miss Greenaway illustrated in 1888.]

"LITTLE DINKY." Page 91.

[First printed in *Patchwork*, 1879, p. 30. "Little Dinky" was Miss Dorothy Locker Lampson, the poet's second daughter. As already stated at p. 168, Miss Greenaway made a separate picture of "Little Dinky" which was inserted in the l. p. copy of 1881.]

"ANY POET TO HIS LOVE." Page 93.

[First printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for March, 1876, and afterwards published in the edition of 1876, p. 187.]

"IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN." Page 94.

[First published at p. 189 of the edition of 1874.]

"THE CUCKOO." Page 96.

[First published in the Book Fellow's Club volume of 1883, p. 99.]

"To Lina Oswald." Page 97.

[First published in a different form in the edition of 1870, p. 182. To some of the subsequent editions was prefixed the quatrain :—

"When vapid poets vex thee sore,
Thy Mentor's old, and would remind thee,
That if thy griefs are all before,
The pleasures are not all behind thee."

In the volume of 1875, p. 179, is a second poem to Miss Oswald which is not included in the volume of 1893.]

"My Mistress's Boots." Page 99.

[First published in the edition of 1865, p. 75, with a woodcut heading by Richard Doyle. As already stated, George Cruikshank's etching for the same poem was prefixed to the privately printed issue of 1868. The epigraph is altered from a discarded poem of 1857—"Miss Edith," p. 78, in the first edition.]

"The Reason Why." Page 102.

[First published in the edition of 1874, p. 181.]

"A Winter Fantasy." Page 103.

[This, first printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for March, 1873, and afterwards published at p. 184 of the edition of 1874, is imitated in part from No. 5 of the "Fantaisies d'Hiver" in the *Émaux et Camées* of Théophile Gautier, of which the following are stanzas 1 and 2 :—

" Sous le voile qui vous protège,
Défiant les regards jaloux,
Si vous sortez par cette neige,
Redoutez vos pieds andalous ;

" La neige saisit comme un moule
L'empreinte de ce pied mignon
Qui, sur le tapis blanc qu'il foule,
Signe, à chaque pas, votre nom " . . .]

" THE HOUSEMAID." Page 104.

[First published in the Moxon Selection of 1865, p. 58. The first motto was—

" Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide," from Wordsworth's " Reverie of Poor Susan " ; its second in 1874—

" The poor can love through toil and pain,
Although their homely speech is fain
To halt in fetters :
They feel as much, and do far more,
Than some of those they bow before,
Miscall'd their *betters.*"

—a discarded stanza from an earlier version of the poem.]

" HEINE TO HIS MISTRESS." Page 107.

[First published in the edition of 1876, p. 186, where it is said to have been suggested by Mr William Stigand's *Heine* [1875].]

" THE BEAR PIT. " Page 108.

[First published in the edition of 1862, p. 66. In some of the earlier versions the existing motto formed the closing couplet.]

"The Old Stonemason." Page 110.

[First printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for February 1876, and then published in the edition of 1876, p. 178.]

"The Music Palace." Page 111.

[First published in the edition of 1872, p. 171.]

"Mrs Smith." Page 114.

[First published in the edition of 1865, p. 95. The motto is from a discarded poem entitled "Remember and Forgive," which appeared in the edition of 1872.]

"The Old Government Clerk." Page 117.

[First published in the edition of 1857, p. 21, as "The Old Clerk."]

"Geraldine Green." Page 121.

"My Life is a ——" was first published in the edition of 1857, p. 50. "The Serenade" first appeared in 1862, p. 90.

"Du Rys de Madame d'Allebret." Page 124.

[This, first published in *London Rhymes*, 1882, p. 71, is imitated from the following *épigramme* (No. 51) of Clément Marot, 1544 :—

"*Elle a très bien ceste gorge d'albastre,*
Ce doulx parler, ce cler tainct, ces beaulx yeulx ;
Mais en effect, ce petit rys follastre,
C'est à mon gré ce qui luy sied le mieulx ;

Elle en pourroit les chemins et les lieux
Où elle passe à plaisir inciter ;
Et si ennuy me venoit contrister
Tant que par mort fust ma vie abbatue,
Il me fauldroit pour me resusciter
Que ce rys là duquel elle me tue.]

"THE LADY I LOVE." Page 125.

[First published in *London Rhymes*, 1882, p. 71.]

"TEMPORA MUTANTUR." Page 127.

[First published in the first edition of 1857, p. 13, with a motto from the *Greek Idyl* of Mortimer Collins. Lee Boo, prince of Goo-roo-raa, was a Pelew islander who died in 1784.]

"TO MY OLD FRIEND POSTUMUS." Page 129.

[First appeared in the edition of 1862, p. 33. "Postumus" was the James Gibbs of *My Confidences*, 1896, pp. 387-406. The motto is modified from the last quatrain of a poem ("The Four Seasons"), also published in the edition of 1857, p. 84, but never reprinted.]

"ON A PORTRAIT OF A LADY." Page 131.

[Published in the edition of 1870, p. 184. This motto was afterwards prefixed :—

"I gathered it wet for my own sweet pet,
As we whispered and walked apart ;
She gave me that rose, it is fragrant yet,—
And, oh ! it is near my heart."]

"INCHBAE." Page 134.

[First published in the edition of 1876, p. 184. The motto is that which the writer employed for the revised version of "Geraldine and I," p. 173.]

"AN OLD BUFFER." Page 136.

[First published in the edition of 1870, p. 180. The motto couplet was originally at the end.]

"MY NEIGHBOUR'S WIFE." Page 138.

[First printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for May, 1877, and then included in *London Rhymes*, 1882, p. 88.]

"BABY MINE." Page 140.

[First published in *London Rhymes*, 1882, p. 70.]

"A WORD THAT MAKES US LINGER." 144.

[This is printed in *My Confidences*, 1896, p. 231, as having been written in Lady Tadcaster's visitors' book.]

"THE ROSE AND THE RING." Page 146.

Mr. Thackeray spent a portion of the winter of 1854 in Rome, and while there wrote his little Christmas Story called *The Rose and the Ring*. He was a great friend of the distinguished American sculptor Mr. Story, and was a frequent visitor at his house. I have heard Mr. Story speak with emotion of the kindness of Mr. Thackeray to his little daughter,

then recovering from a severe illness, and he told me that Mr. Thackeray used to come nearly every day to read to Miss Story, often bringing portions of his manuscript with him.

Five or six years afterwards Miss Story showed me a very pretty copy of *The Rose and the Ring*, which Mr. Thackeray had given her with a facetious sketch of himself in the act of presenting her with the work" (*Note by F. L. L.*).

[First published in the Moxon Selection of 1865, p. 79. The verses are thus alluded to in *My Confidences*, 1896, p. 160:—"Story's fair daughter is referred to in the last couplet of my mediocre rhyme on Thackeray's admirable absurdity, *The Rose and the Ring*: 'And you see there's a nice little story'." The "Christmas, 1863," of the title, refers, of course, to Thackeray's death (24th December).]

"Mr. Placid's Flirtation." Page 148.

[First published in Moxon's Selection of 1865, p. 149.]

"Our Photographs." Page 153.

[First printed in *Tom Hood's Comic Annual* for 1872, p. 49, and then included in *London Rhymes*, 1882, p. 74.]

"Advice to a Poet." Page 155.

[First published in longer form in Moxon's Selection of 1865, p. 173. In some editions the present final stanza is used as a motto to the entire volume.]

"The Jester's Moral." Page 159.

[This, with a motto from Praed's "School and Schoolfellows," was the opening poem of Moxon's Selection of 1865. The "Bliss" of the poem was a Mr. Barnett of Yateley, in Hampshire. "There is a passing allusion to this Orbilius of the birch in the fourth, sixth, and ninth stanzas of my lyric, 'The Jester's Moral.'" (*My Confidences*, 1896, pp. 99-100).]

Postscript.

[To the edition of 1870 Locker appended a brief general Note, which he subsequently expanded in later issues. He did not include it in the edition of 1893, and it is idle to speculate why. But as it certainly expresses his views as to the class of poetry to which he had in great measure devoted himself, it may fitly be reproduced here.]

The kind of verse which I have attempted in *some* of the pieces in this volume was in repute during the era of Swift and Prior, and again during the earlier years of this century. Afterwards it fell into comparative neglect, but has now regained some of its old popularity.

Herrick, Suckling, Waller, Swift, Prior, Cowper, Landor, Thomas Moore, Praed, and Thackeray may be considered its representative men, and each has his peculiar merit. Herrick is a finished artist, with a delightful feeling and fancy, and some of his pieces are as perfect as anything of the kind in the language. We admire Suckling for his gusto, and careless, natural grace; while Waller has never been equalled for the way in which he blends his courtly wit and rhythmical elegance; his lines "To a Rose" and "On a Girdle" leave nothing to be desired. Swift

is pre-eminent for his mordant humour, as Prior for his genial and sprightly wit. Cowper is a master of tender and playful irony. Landor is wanting in humour and variety, but he atones for it by his pathos and his pellucid and classical style. Moore, as a satirist, is a very expert swordsman, and although possessing little real sentiment, he has wit, and fun, and sparkling fancy in abundance. Praed possesses a fancy less wild than Moore, while his sympathies are narrower than Thackeray's; he has plenty of wit, however, and a highly idiomatic, incisive, and most finished style, and, *in his peculiar vein*, has never been equalled, and it may be safely affirmed, never can be excelled. What am I to say of Thackeray? As yet he is rather too near to us. I will not criticise him; but I may observe that he is almost as humorous as Swift, and sometimes almost as tender as Cowper, and one does not exactly see why he might not have been as good an artist as most of those above mentioned.

Lovelace has given us one or two little poems, by no means perfect, but which in their way are admirable, The gay and gallant Colonel is at this moment one of our really popular poets, and all for the sake of some two short pages of verse! Marlowe, Wotton, Ben Jonson, Raleigh, and Montrose must not be forgotten, as all have written excellently; not to speak of Carew, Sedley, Parnell ("When thy Beauty appears"), Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, Captain Morris ("I'm often ask'd by plodding Souls"), Canning, Luttrell, Rogers, Coleridge, Mrs. Barbauld ("Human Life"), W. R. Spencer, the brothers Smith, Haynes Bayly, Dr. Barham, Peacock ("Love and Age"), Francis Mahony ("The Bells of Shandon"), Leigh Hunt, Hood, Macaulay ("A Valentine"), Mrs. Browning, and many others, dead and living.

Light lyrical verse should be short, elegant, refined, and fanciful, not seldom distinguished by chastened sentiment, and often playful. The tone should not be pitched high, and it should be idiomatic, the rhythm crisp and sparkling, the rhyme frequent and never forced, while the entire poem should be marked by tasteful moderation, high finish, and completeness, for however trivial the subject matter may be, indeed rather in proportion to its triviality, subordination to the rules of composition and perfection of execution should be strictly enforced. Each piece cannot be expected to exhibit all these characteristics, but the qualities of brevity and buoyancy are essential.

It should also have the air of being spontaneous; indeed, to write it well is a difficult accomplishment, and no one has fully succeeded in it without possessing a certain gift of irony which is not only a rarer quality than humour, or even wit, but is altogether less commonly met with than is sometimes imagined. It is almost needless to say that good sense will be found to underlie all the best poetry of whatever kind. The poem may be tinctured with a well-bred philosophy; it may be gay and gallant, it may be playfully malicious or tenderly ironical, it may display lively banter, and it may be satirically facetious, it may even, considering it as a mere work of art, be pagan in its philosophy or trifling in its tone, but it must never be ponderous or commonplace.

It is interesting to see what Voltaire [1] says of rhyme,

[1] We insist that the rhyme shall cost nothing to the ideas, that it shall neither be trivial nor too far-fetched; we exact rigorously in a verse the same purity, the same precision, as in prose. We do not admit the smallest licence; we require an author to carry without a break all these chains, and yet that he should appear ever free.

its value, and its difficulties, and then to observe with how little success it is usually practised. Rhyme and alliteration cannot be too important features in burlesque verse. They may be prominent in satire and semi-humorous poetry, but their presence should be less and less marked as the poem rises in tone.

There are no better rhymers in the English language than Byron and Barham, and it is consoling to find that the most worn and the worst used rhymes and metres instantly recover all their charm and freshness in the hands of a master.

[In 1867, three years after the Moxon Selection of his own poems, Mr. Locker made an anthology of the above class of verse, which he entitled *Lyra Elegantiarum*. It was published by Mr. Moxon, and was further defined as "a collection of some of the best specimens of *Vers de Société* and *Vers d'occasion* in the English Language by deceased authors." Of this, a revised and enlarged edition was issued in 1891 in the Minerva Library of Messrs. Ward, Lock and Co. On this occasion Mr. Locker had for co-editor Mr. Coulson Kernahan.]

THE END

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